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WITH an election looming, now is the time for right-wing pundits to come to the aid of the party.

Michael Gove, for one, is happy to oblige. In Tuesday's *Times* he condemned the ceaseless sniping at William Hague, not least by fans of Michael Portillo who want a more "modern" and "inclusive" approach. Their criticism "goes beyond the unseemly and verges on the pathological", Gove warned, and the Tories must resist it: for Hague and his "common sense Conservatism" are actually immensely popular.

Gove's plea for loyalty and silence raised smiles among Hagueites at Conservative central office. Can this be the same Michael Gove, they wonder, who wrote a hagiography of Michael Portillo a few years back and has since acted as unofficial mouthpiece for the Portillistas? The same Gove who has previously dismissed "common sense Conservatism" as a euphemism for thoughtless opportunism? Who complained in February that Hague's "lack of a coherent ideology" had left his party "lamentably short of what is required to challenge credibly for office"? And who only last month wrote a lengthy tirade against Amanda Platell, the leader's right-hand woman, the only effect of which was to lower Tory morale on the eve of an election campaign?

Equally comic is the sudden blizzard of pieces by Simon Heffer in the *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Telegraph* praising William Hague as "a serious player" who has given "a sure-footed performance". According to Heffer, the anonymous undermining of Hague by Tory malcontents is "treachery of the worst sort... an unutterable disgrace."

One persistent offender is the hack who, at the time of the 1997 leadership election, denounced Hague as a "nauseating" man of no political principles, driven only by "ambition and self-interest". Simon Heffer (for it was he) predicted that under Hague the Conservative party would stay in opposition for another 13 years or more. More recently, he announced that the Tory leader was "bonkers". With friends like these...

DOWNING STREET and Buckingham Palace may have supported each other publicly over Sophiegate, but behind the scenes relations are far from cordial.

With the tabloids adopting an increasingly republican tone Tony Blair ordered his own spin machine, under the direct control of Alastair Campbell, to help the palace mount a damage limitation exercise. It was this operation, with Brenda's assistance, that concluded that Sophie had to resign from her PR firm and drafted the various statements that accompanied the announcement.

This sidelining of the palace's own communications team and press office was ominous for Simon Walker, Brenda's own spinner, who is on secondment from BA. Walker has followed a policy of letting the royals "be themselves" (see *Eye* 1019) and so he sat mutely beside the Wessex girl as she trilled her anodyne remarks. Formerly nicknamed, "the air hostess" before Sophiegate, Walker is now referred to around the Palace as, ahem, "the air head".

Brenda might have spared her family much embarrassment had she heeded the *Eye's* warnings about the accident-prone spin-doctor. After a failed attempt to become a Labour politician in New Zealand, we noted, he returned to Britain to work for a financial PR firm, whence he was seconded in March 1996 to advise John Major on how to win the next election.

Despite his contribution to the Tories' worst drubbing in living memory, in 1998 he somehow wangled himself a job as communications director at British Airways, where he presided over a succession of PR disasters while firing off hysterical and threatening letters to hacks who dared question the genius of chief executive Bob Ayling. Last March, when the *Observer* reported that Ayling was on the

More leaders than the Tories...

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way out, Walker went ballistic. "Ludicrous, laughable, totally untrue," he raged: Ayling's departure was "inconceivable". Ayling was sacked the next day.

As we predicted in *Eye* 1006, "if Walker spins for Brenda as he had for BA, we should get a repulic by 2003". Before landing his palace appointment, he had tried desperately to be selected as a Conservative parliamentary candidate. The Tories, surprisingly showing a keener instinct for self-preservation than the House of Windsor, turned him down.

SOPHIE WESSEX is not the only one to have lost a job as a result of the debacle. Edward will be spending more time with his programme making outfit, Ardent, following Mummy's decision to take away a nice Commonwealth role she had promised him. The idea of Brenda having her own part-time ambassador touring the Commonwealth has been around for some time and was designed in the long-term as a job for Prince William. However, Edward was going to start it off, as Brenda informed a private family meeting at Sandringham shortly after Christmas. Edward had already met Commonwealth supremo Don McKinnon to discuss the role.

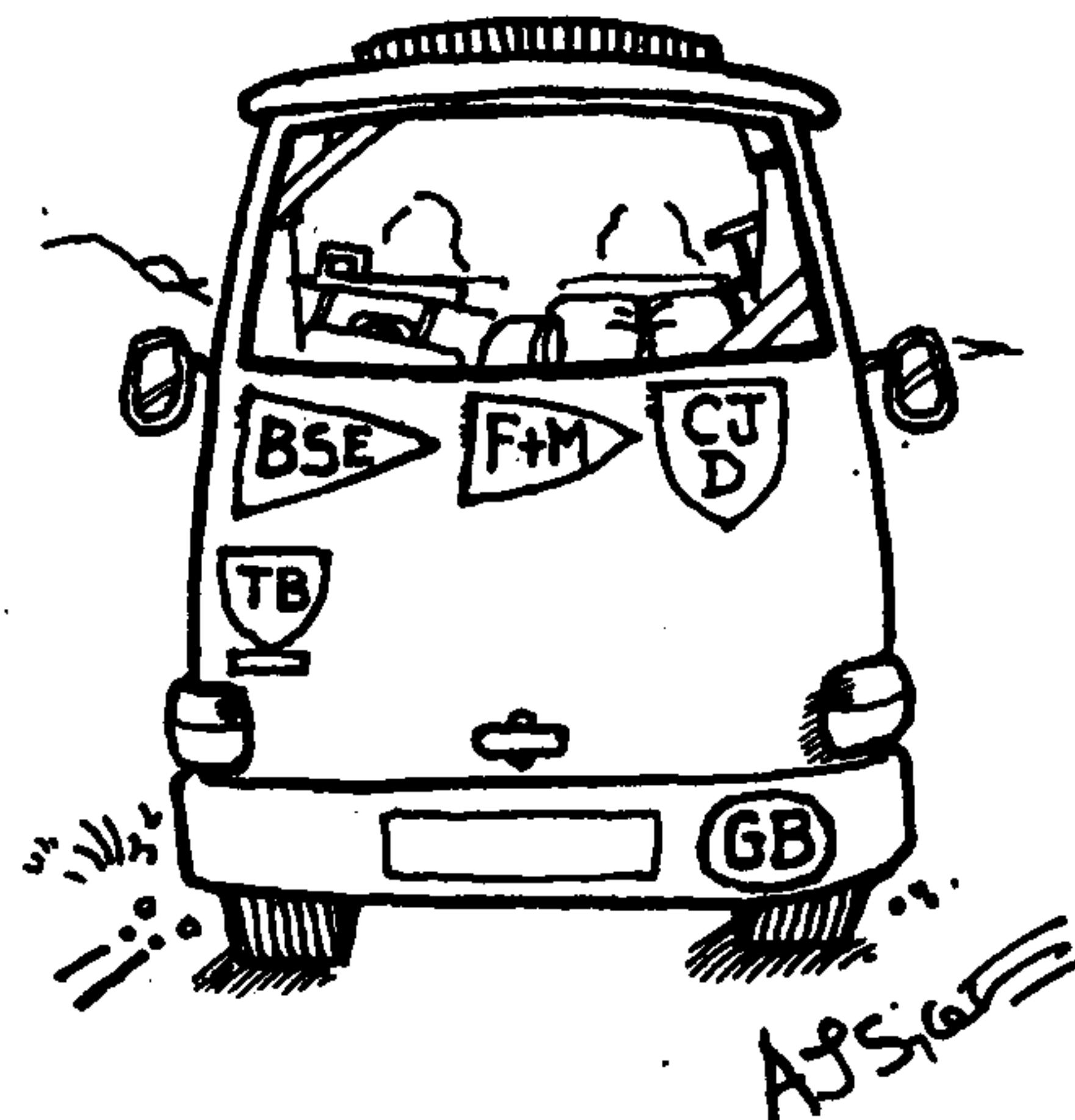
Alas, worried about the deteriorating image of younger royals and the potential for press speculation about Edward gaining business contacts while on royal duty, Brenda has shelved the project until William is ready to take it on.

TO celebrate its belated Sophiegate scoop, the *News of the World* carried a full-page article in which its publicity-shy hack Mazher Mahmood revealed "a few of the tricks of his amazing trade". He claimed to have an insatiable urge to "expose greed and hypocrisy".

Alas, presumably through lack of space, he neglected to mention another aspect of his motivation. But it can be found in the diaries of former Tory MP Gyles Brandreth, who worked with Mahmood at TV-am in the 1980s.

On 12 May 1994, Maz rang to warn Gyles that the *Sunday People* was planning to run a story about the MP's alleged visit to a massage parlour in Chester. "We wondered if you'd like to talk to us first, to put your side of the story." Brandreth was mystified, telling Mahmood that he'd never been to a massage parlour in his life. When Maz continued to badger him, Gyles asked why he was wasting his time and talents in this ghastly way.

Instead of delivering a pious lecture on the need to expose greed and hypocrisy, all the *Screws* man could manage by way of explanation was a pathetic whimper: "I've got a mortgage..."



Street OF Shame

"NEVER mind the Curse of *Hello!*" a Fleet Street executive murmured after Colin Myler's abrupt departure from the *Sunday Mirror*. "What about the Curse of the editors Rommel left behind?"

In his first stint as editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, it was Myler who published the notorious sneak-photos of Princess Diana in a gym – pictures which cost the paper a fortune in a reader-backlash and an advertiser-boycott. But on that occasion he survived, thanks to his patron David "Rommel" Montgomery, who had been equally enthusiastic about forking out £70,000 for the photographs.

Indeed, he was actually promoted to edit the *Daily Mirror* – where he turned out to be a lacklustre disaster and was soon replaced by another Rommel protégé, Piers "Morgan" Moron. Montgomery gave Myler a £500,000 pay-off on condition he never told the full embarrassing story of the Diana pictures.

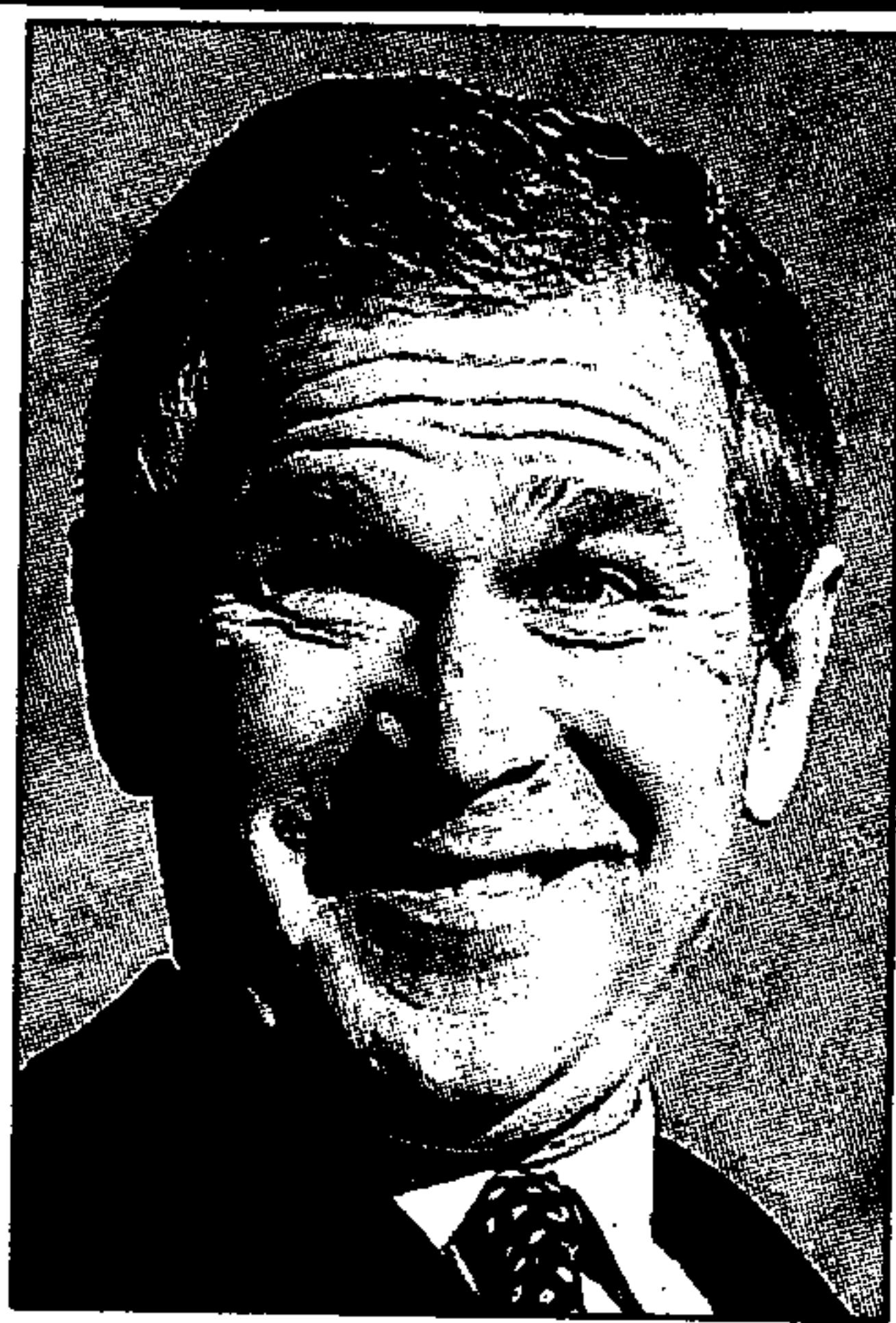
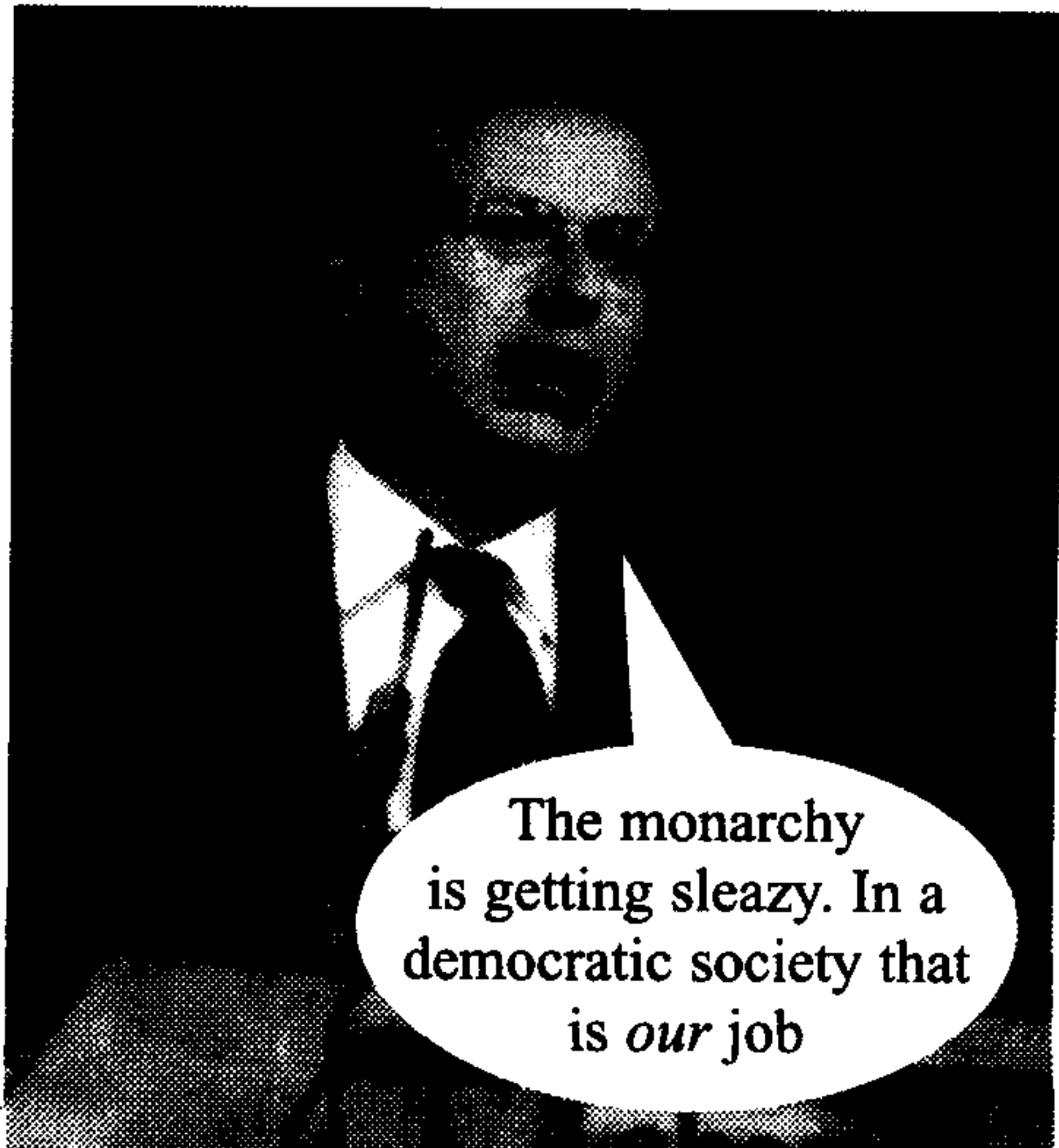
To general amazement, however, Rommel later brought Myler back to edit the *Sunday Mirror* once again. At the time Montgomery was fighting for his own position, clashing with chairman Sir Victor Blank over the latter's desire to merge the Mirror Group with Philip Graff's Trinity newspaper empire; he needed loyal yes-men such as Myler to shore up his crumbling power-base.

When the merger went ahead anyway, and Rommel was shown the door, the national editors he had chosen were retained by the new management. The shame and disaster they have brought on the papers ever since are described in Canary Wharf as "Monty-zuma's Revenge".

PS: Myler's bosses threw him to wolves last week in the hope of placating the City, already angry over Trinity Mirror's tumbling share price and its scandalous indulgence of Piers Moron. But the choice of Moron's deputy Tina Weaver to succeed Myler has merely raised further doubts in the City about the board's judgement: as *Eye* readers may recall, Weaver herself was one of the dramatis personae in the *Mirror* share-dealing drama, having bought more than 3,000 shares in a company called Booth Industries days before they were tipped in the "City Slickers" column.

PPS: The *Daily Mirror* is spending millions on an ad campaign boasting that it's the only red-top which puts serious news on page one, unlike its trivia-obsessed rivals. So when every other tabloid, broadsheet and TV bulletin was leading with news that the Leeds soccer trial had been aborted at a cost of £8m, what did the "upmarket" *Mirror* splash all over its front page? Why, the rumour that DJ Chris Evans is planning to marry teenage pop-singer Billie Piper!

BYERS SHOCK



President Bush
... regrets pilot is missing

Press & Journal



THE dotcom fever that swept the *Financial Times* last year now looks more like a plague.

Having examined the books and seen the cost of their lavish internet spree, *FT* executives are sweating. Sources close to their P45s reveal that the newspaper's profits for last year were more or less equalled by losses at *FT.com*.

To cut costs some 40 webheads have already rolled. No journalist has gone yet, but the *FT*'s doctors have put hacks on a strict diet: boozy lunches, round the world jaunts and other "non-essential" expenses are all for the chop. However, someone forgot to tell *FT.com*'s "social committee". Journalists working on the website were astonished to get an invitation over Easter to "come out and play" – free grog at a posh central London venue. Such jollies, reminiscent of the internet boom days, are no longer in keeping with the spartan new mood. But as so many internet pioneers have shown, Rome wasn't burnt in a day...

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

IN HIS round-up of Lorraine Heggessy's first six months at the helm of BBC1, *Guardian* media editor Matt Wells touched on the strange phenomenon of the Sunday night graveyard slot.

"Five lavish shows went down the ratings plughole," he wrote, "with the woefully scheduled *Rebel Heart* collapsing to a record low." Woefully scheduled? Wells's euphemistic choice of words to describe the £6m flop drama about the 1916 Easter Rising is surely unconnected to the fact that it was penned by *Grauniad* writer Ronan Bennet, who lives with *Grauniad* deputy editor Georgina Henry and is co-writing a future BBC drama about genetic modification with his pal, *Grauniad* editor Alan Rusbridger...

IN an editorial headed "Time to Set the Record Straight", the *News of the Screws* justified its publication of the Sophie Wessex tapes by declaring that it could not tolerate "unsavoury characters" such as her partner Murray Harkin, who was now exposed as a "cocaine-sniffing, promiscuous homosexual" thanks to the heroic efforts of Sheikh Mazher Mahmood.

On the very next page there was an unflattering profile of Sophie by one Julie Burchill. Can this be the same "unsavoury" hackette who boasts ceaselessly of her lesbian adventures, and who proudly announced in the *Guardian* recently that she had "put enough up my nostrils to stun the entire Colombian armed forces"?

As *Eye* readers will recall, two years ago the *News of the World* vowed never to employ anyone who had used cocaine. Time to set the record straight, perhaps?

PS: According to Burchill's article in the *Screws*, "the only thing that Sophie has done for the wretched and reviled is to flash her boobs at Chris Tarrant". Perhaps she had forgotten that the wretched and reviled are in fact her paymasters at *News International*, who splashed the photos of Sophie's boobs all over the *Sun*.

ONE of the most eccentric pieces on Sheikhgate came from the *Spectator*'s media pundit, Stephen Glover.

While other newspapers were blaming royal spin-doctor Simon Walker for the disastrous attempt to buy off the *Screws* by granting an exclusive interview with Sophie Wessex, Glover maintained that press complaints commission (PCC) chairman Lord Wakeham was probably the real culprit – even though Wakeham had flatly denied recommending the interview. Glover attributed this revelation to unnamed "Buckingham Palace sources".

Using the same sources, he then floated a bizarre theory "entertained by some in Buckingham Palace": that "St James's Palace – Prince Charles's outfit, known to some at Buckingham Palace as the 'palace across the way' – fitted up the Countess... The Prince Charles camp are determined to cut the minor royals down to size, and ideally to clear them off the board. Here was a heaven-sent opportunity for St James's Palace to inflict maximum damage on the chumpish countess."

Who could have put such an idea into Glover's head? The main beneficiary of this feeble blame-shifting exercise was of course the beleaguered Simon Walker. And, as the *Eye* pointed out when he took up his royal job last summer, Walker "was a member of the glamorous Oxford generation that included Benazir Bhutto, Tina Brown and, er, Stephen Glover". Pure coincidence, no doubt.

WITH undisguised glee, the *Sunday Herald* reports that a US correspondent for the *Scotsman*, Robert Tait, has been caught plagiarising a *Washington Post* article about American education.

Tait himself is quoted as saying: "It was very well written, very well told. I simply lifted it." The *Herald*, very properly, admits that the source of its own story is the American magazine *Brill's Content*.

Alas, the paper's punctiliousness does not extend to its own front page. In the very same issue, under the headline "Revealed: How EU Fraud Spread Virus", it exposes the scandal of "black sheep" – animals which are moved around the country so that different farmers can each claim subsidy on them. A "*Sunday Herald* investigation" suggests this may be why foot-and-mouth spread so rapidly.

Could the *Herald*'s "investigation" by any chance be related to a piece in the previous issue of the *Eye* revealing the connection between, er, black sheep and foot-and-mouth?

Canadians
get helping
hand during
sperm crisis

Sunday Herald

THE Sunday Mirror, with its trial-stopping interview with Muhammad Najeib, father of the student beaten up in Leeds city centre last year, wasn't the only Trinity Mirror-owned newspaper to upset its Asian readers last week.

The principal contributor to *Eastern Eye's* annual Asian "Rich List" feature last week was snooty *Daily Telegraph* hack Amit Roy. Roy's involvement in compiling the list surprised many Asian journalists, as he had been *persona non grata* at *Eastern Eye* ever since writing an "opinion" piece for the *Sunday Telegraph* in 1995 in which he attacked the Sikhs under the headline "Madness Under a Turban".

"The Sikhs are great fun," wrote Roy in 1995. "They live up parties. They laugh, joke and love to get drunk. Their women have the reputation of being the most uninhibited. But there is a downside. There lurks in the Sikh character a madness that expresses itself in unpredictable acts of extreme violence..." (Re-read the passage, substituting "blacks" or "Irish" for "Sikh", to understand why it caused such offence.)

Eastern Eye, aimed at young upwardly-mobile British Asians, was founded in 1990 by Sarwar Ahmed. It ran its first Rich List in 1997, compiled by Philip Beresford, who also compiles the *Sunday Times* rich list. Ahmed left last year after the paper's parent company, Ethnic Media Group, became part of the Trinity Mirror empire. Ahmed poached Beresford and his list for the launch earlier this month of *Asian Xpress*, a rival to his old paper. Desperate not to upstaged by the upstart, *Eastern Eye* evidently abandoned its scruples about employing the Sikh-baiting Roy.

SOPHIE BLAMES PRESS



A NEW record in tastelessness has been achieved by the paparazzi picture agency, Big Pictures.

On 10 April gory shots of a woman who had been knocked down and killed by a bus on Oxford Street the previous day appeared on the agency's database, bigpicturesphoto.com. The photos captioned "Carnage on Oxford Street", which appeared in between snaps of Naomi Campbell getting out of a taxi and Lady Victoria Hervey shopping, were available to be downloaded by anyone for the modest sum of £5 each.

The agency admits it was an oversight to publish the pictures which have since been removed from the website – apparently it is more used to dealing with celebrity snapshots than real news stories with the potential to shock and offend.

"The men used to get their willies out, but you'd just learn to put up with it," says Sue Temple. "You deal with it because everyone is in the same boat. There was no point complaining. Women had to take it on the chin."

The Grauniad

HACKWATCH

Beneath Contempt

"WHAT A SUNDAY MIRROR COCK-UP," the *Sun* reported gleefully after Mr Justice Poole halted the trial of Leeds footballers Jonathan Woodgate and Lee Bowyer.

The gloating continued in a lengthy editorial. "Who is in charge at this public company? Are they fit to run national newspapers? The *Sunday Mirror* has committed a journalistic blunder so great it takes your breath away... Someone should be fired for this blunder. Don't count on it, though... The bosses of Trinity Mirror now employ two editors who could be sent to jail – one for insider share dealing, the other for contempt of court. And yet they do NOTHING!"

Quite so. But although the *Sun* omitted to mention it, this isn't the first time that justice has been sabotaged by reckless newspapers. Or, rather, one newspaper in particular...

1987: At the trial of three men charged with murdering PC Keith Blakelock, the judge condemns the *Sun* for publishing a huge photograph of Winston Silcott during a case where identification is likely to be an issue. Meanwhile, a high court judge in Edinburgh fines the *Sun* £5,000 for "deplorable" coverage of the trial of a fireman accused of attempting to murder his wife by attaching a bomb to her car. Its report of the first day's evidence was headlined "My husband tried to blow me apart" – even though the wife had not said her husband was responsible. "It is important to realise," Lord Mayfield warns the *Sun*, "that an accused person has a fundamental right to fair trial, based on the evidence presented and tested in court."

1988: Lord Mayfield must wonder why he bothered. The *Sun* has to pay a £75,000 fine for contempt of court, after publishing prejudicial reports about a doctor who was tried, in a private prosecution brought by the newspaper, for raping an eight-year-old girl. Although the doctor was acquitted, Lord Justice Watkins accuses the *Sun* of charging about "like a wild, unbridled horse" by running articles "calculated to influence a jury and interfere with the course of justice". A few months later, the *Sun* is fined a further £22,000 for a "disgraceful" report which gave the "clear impression" that a man arrested after a shooting incident in Kirkcaldy must be guilty.

1993: A year after being convicted of murdering Alison Shaughnessy, Michelle and Lisa Taylor are freed from jail when the court of appeal finds that "unremitting, extensive, sensational, inaccurate and misleading" coverage of their murder trial was so bad that it created "a real risk of prejudice". Much of the judicial criticism focuses on a picture of Michelle kissing John Shaughnessy, Alison's husband, which the *Sun* had published under the screaming headline "CHEAT'S KISS". As Lord Justice McCowan points out, "nothing like that had been said in court... It was not reporting at all. It was comment, and comment which assumed guilt on the part of the girls in the dock".

1994: The *Sun* is fined £6,000 for publishing extracts from doctors' reports used in proceedings which concerned the welfare of a child. Mr Justice Connell says that such serious contempt of court requires "more than a nominal penalty". Later in the year, the *Sun* has to pay a record £100,000 for printing a picture of a murder suspect two days before he was due to appear in an identity parade, thus

wrecking any chance of a subsequent conviction. "The scale of the penalties must mark the seriousness of the contempt," Lord Justice Steyn declares, "and discourage others who might be tempted to imperil the criminal justice system." He adds that if publication had been a deliberate attempt to interfere with the course of justice – rather than merely a breathtaking blunder – the editor would have received "an effective prison sentence and a fine of at least seven figures".

1995: The appeal court orders the retrial of a man who was jailed for 22 years in 1993 for hiding IRA explosives, deciding that the original trial was prejudiced by "adverse publicity" – including a photo-caption in the *Sun* which said that the defendant was "obsessed". In a separate case, Mr Justice Thorpe fines the *Sun* £1,000 for contempt of court after it breaches an injunction not to publish photographs of one of Fred West's children. Later in the year, Judge Roger Sanders aborts the trial of Gillian Taylforth's boyfriend Geoff Knights, who has been charged with assaulting a cab-driver, following "unfair, outrageous and oppressive" reporting.

He notes that the *Sun* continued to publish lurid allegations against Knights even after the trial date was fixed: "There could be no more obvious example of deliberate acts being done which were calculated to prejudice a fair trial."

1996: The trial of Maria O'Sullivan, mother of the snooker star Ronnie O'Sullivan, is abandoned when the *Sun* reports that she once served a jail sentence for VAT evasion. The story breaches a contempt of court order banning any mention of the conviction while she is being tried on charges of dealing in obscene magazines and videos. Judge Eugene Cotran fines the *Sun* £10,000 for its "crass and incompetent" behaviour.

1997: The attorney-general brings contempt proceedings against the *Sun* (and four other tabloids) for scuppering the trial of Geoff Knights. To general astonishment, the high court decides that although the press coverage was prejudicial it would be unfair to find any individual publication guilty of contempt. "The surprise ruling yesterday was seen as giving the go-ahead to trial by media," the legal affairs editor of the *Independent* observes. Meanwhile the *Sun* is fined £5,000 for contempt of court after running background pieces on a "sex beast" while he was still awaiting trial.

1998: The *Sun* has a new editor, David Yelland, but he is clearly determined to maintain his predecessors' fine traditions. The trial of James McCardle is abandoned when Yelland prints the headline "*Sun* Helped Me Nail Docklands Bomber" while a jury is considering its verdict on two murder charges against McCardle in connection with the bombing. The story describes McCardle as a member of "an IRA sniper gang in South Armagh", even though his defence is that he had no connection with the IRA.

John Bevan QC, the prosecutor, denounces the *Sun's* "breathtaking irresponsibility" in ignoring a court order which was in words "even a child could understand". John Jeffries, whose son was killed in the Docklands blast, demands that "the editor should be sacked and not be given a job on any other paper... I feel cheated of justice."

1999: The *Sun* is fined £35,000 for "serious contempt" in the McCardle case. The editor has been found guilty of a blunder so great it takes your breath away. And yet his bosses do NOTHING!

To the immense relief, presumably, of David "someone should be fired" Yelland.

WORLD OF HYPE

ONCE upon a time the Murdoch press lapped up stories about retired disc jockey Chris Evans and his irresistible attractiveness to women. Strangely, though, a degree of scepticism has crept into coverage by the *Sun* – and even the *News of the World* – of his latest epic romance with vulnerable pop popette Billie Piper.

Instead of being hailed as a superstud, Evans is portrayed as a pathetic figure; an accurate enough analysis perhaps, but not quite what he's used to.

Similarly, whereas Martine McCutcheon previously attracted sympathy for her unfortunate choice of male companions and recurring health problems, she suddenly finds herself portrayed as a malingering jeopardising *My Fair Lady's* West End run.

What unites Evans and Martine of course is the

substantial monthly retainer each pays to Freud Communications, the pr firm run by Matthew Freud.

Until recently Freud's could do no wrong as far as News Corp staff were concerned. Alas, Matthew's decision in January to ditch his mistress Elisabeth Murdoch, in much the same way as he'd earlier ditched his wife for Elisabeth (but with added baby this time round) seems to have gone down badly at Wapping.

While Elisabeth has bounced back from the failure of her and Matthew's internet incubator Oxygen by setting up another independent TV production company (partly funded by her father and with a surprise contract to make programmes for BSkyB) the prospects for her former lover are not so bright. Being a client of Freud's now seems to guarantee regular drubbings from daddy's newspapers!



ASSUMING Tony Blair makes it back to Downing Street after the general election, he is widely expected to hold a referendum on entering the European single currency in 2002. That much we knew. But he has just realised that Brenda's golden jubilee plans, also due next year, are unlikely to help the pro-European cause.

National celebrations of monarchy are bound to play into the hands of Eurosceptics making a song-and-dance about Brenda's mug disappearing from our banknotes. Buckingham Palace has largely retained control of plans for the jubilee, so Blair's scope for trying to hijack the celebrations for his own ends will be limited.

President Dubya may also find himself with a hole in his diary because of the Euro-vote. Negotiations with the Americans have been opened with a view to bringing Bush on a state visit to the UK in the autumn of 2002. Blair's advisers are now pointing out that a Bush visit close to the referendum would only lend comfort to those claiming that closer European integration would mean a weakening of the so-called "special relationship".

Downing Street is faced with either declaring a republic or packing Brenda off to Washington during the run-up to the referendum. Or they could just put the damn thing off until 2003. Now there's an idea...

The Supreme Court has upheld a city's right to insist that exotic dancers cannot perform totally nude and must at minimum wear a G-string and pasties.

Time Magazine website

AS ALL the world knows, Boris Johnson hopes to become a Tory MP. But how many people realise that his mag, the *Spectator*, has now become an official propaganda sheet and fundraiser for the Conservative party?

The abandonment of any pretence at journalistic independence is announced in a letter to thousands of party members from Francis Maude MP, who recently became a director of the magazine. He urges them to take out a six-month subscription at the "special price" of £35: "You would get the *Spectator* delivered to your door at a 40 percent discount to its cover price. But much more than that, the *Spectator* will donate half of what you pay to that most deserving – and needy – of causes, our very own Conservative Party. Not only will this help William Hague and the rest of us to fight a really effective campaign, but you will enrich your life."

An accompanying letter from Boris Johnson explains that his main purpose as editor is to "stir the blood and stiffen the sinews" of Tory campaigners. "As the *Spectator* drops through your letterbox each week," he adds, "you'll have the double satisfaction of reading the best written magazine in the English language and of knowing that half your subscription has gone directly towards funding our almost inevitable electoral triumph... My friends, victory is within our grasp."

Nurse, the screens!

SION SIMON, prospective Labour candidate for Erdington, may have come up trumps in Birmingham but it was not that long ago the corpulent columnist was sniffing around safe Labour seats in South Wales – even going so far as taking up weekend residence in the Rhondda Valley in the hope of succeeding incumbent MP, Alan Rogers.

At the time Sion insisted that the Labour Party's candidate handbook record his name as Sion "Llewellyn" Simon. This was certainly an improvement on his Fleet Street epithet, "Sion Bunter, New Labour Punter"; but who can prepare Erdington's favourite son for his new identity as Sion "Benny" (as in *Crossroads*) Simon? Someone should knit him a bobble hat, fast.

IT IS hard to imagine a more toothless watchdog than Tom King's intelligence and security committee. Yet such is Tony Blair's devotion to the secret services that even King has now been prompted to growl and snap a little.

While the former Tory minister's committee has been characteristically supine over the David Shayler affair, it has however made one or two modest recommendations for reform in the intelligence world – both of which, to the committee's annoyance, have been ignored.

The first was that spies should have access to a "secure employment tribunal" to try to prevent the kind of brouhaha generated by Shayler and that other disgruntled former spook, Richard Tomlinson. Tomlinson was denied the right to go to an industrial tribunal on "national security" grounds, and as a result fled the country and spilled the beans from abroad.

The committee hopes that a special industrial tribunal might keep whistleblowers onside. However, after making the recommendation "three years ago", King's committee was forced to conclude recently: "We regret that despite regular assurances, the necessary regulations are not in place."

The second modest proposal was that the ministerial committee on intelligence, which is chaired by the prime minister, should meet at least annually to review the overall performance of the intelligence community. The committee was "disappointed to note that it has still not met and that a whole parliament is, therefore, likely to have passed without any meeting".

So despite Shayler and Tomlinson; despite the repeated loss of secret briefcases; despite the revelation that MI5 had files on dangerous radicals like Jack Straw and Peter Mandelson; and despite a rocket attack on security service buildings in central London, Tony Blair has not once formally chaired a committee to review the secret services' operations since the election. Ironically this revelation itself was hardly reported and was itself almost secret.

THIS week the government gives employment tribunals new powers to increase costs awarded against the losing party from £500 to £10,000. There are also new powers to penalise those with "misconceived" applications or who are unfortunate enough to get saddled with poor legal advisers.

Trade secretary Stephen Byers justifies the hike by saying the recent increase in ET cases – up 12,000 last year to 103,935 – is mainly caused by ill-founded cases. "I am concerned that there are too many weak cases in the system causing significant delays for those with genuine claims," he said.

Actually there is no research to support this but much evidence to suggest the increase reflects the government's extension of employment rights (claims can be now brought after one year's service instead of two, for example).

Far from weeding out ill-conceived claims, the government's action will almost certainly scare off those with strong cases too. There is no legal aid for employment cases, only 30 percent of the workforce are members of trade unions and costs are most likely to be met from the applicant's pocket. The Legal Action Group is already collating a dossier of cases where unscrupulous employers have used the threat of the news costs order to frighten applicants into withdrawing claims.

Byers has brought in these changes ahead of publication of Sir Andrew Leggatt's lengthy and detailed review of tribunals covering these very issues – no doubt because Leggatt will not be recommending such unfair changes.

The government of course greatly upset its new friends in big and little business, with the introduction of greater employment rights. Perhaps the truth about the changes and rise in costs lies in the second part of Byers' statement. "They also place unacceptable burdens on businesses and taxpayer."

Hague, The [Netherlands]

Hague, The

Netherlands (Government)

Hague, William [prime minister, United Kingdom]

Hague, William

IBM World Book

AS THE election looms, the antics of the staunchly eurosceptic UK Independence Party grow even more surreal.

On 1 April members of UKIP took part in a cross-party debate held at the Sallis Benney Theatre, part of the University of Brighton, to discuss the motion: "Britain would be better off out of Europe".

To get those present in the mood, including Labour MP for Brighton Kemptown Des Turner and UKIP MEP Nigel Farage, the evening kicked off with a performance of a pantomime written produced and directed by UKIP's prospective parliamentary candidate for Hove, Richard Franklin, entitled "The Kween's Speech".

Some of the more traditional party members in attendance were quite taken aback by the political satire starring local actress and gay icon, Dora Bryan, which included a scene in which Black Rod indulged in a lewd sexual act with a fictional Faery Queen of England.

FRIENDS OF CAPTAIN BOB

A SHORT footnote to our item in the last *Eye* about Labour peer Lord Donoughue and the London School of Economics.

In October 1993 the *Financial Times* ran a piece, based on an *Eye* story, about his failure to prevent Cap'n Bob's illicit plundering of pension-fund shares via London and Bishopsgate Investments, the company of which Donoughue was executive vice-chairman. Because of Donoughue's LSE connections, the student newspaper *Beaver* summarised the *FT*'s report on its front page – whereupon a furious Donoughue threatened to sue the students' union and have the paper closed down.

The then chairman of LSE ordered *Beaver* to print a full-page apology the following week. A mere eight years on, the long-delayed DTI investigation confirms that if Donoughue had done his duty Maxwell's looting could have been stopped. No doubt the LSE's grantees will bear this in mind if or when they next consider a proposal to appoint Lord D. to the college's court of governors.



I want to thank the United States for its sympathy and practical help. The expertise and hard work of veterinary surgeons who have come to Britain to help have enabled us to speed up the containment and eradication of this disease.

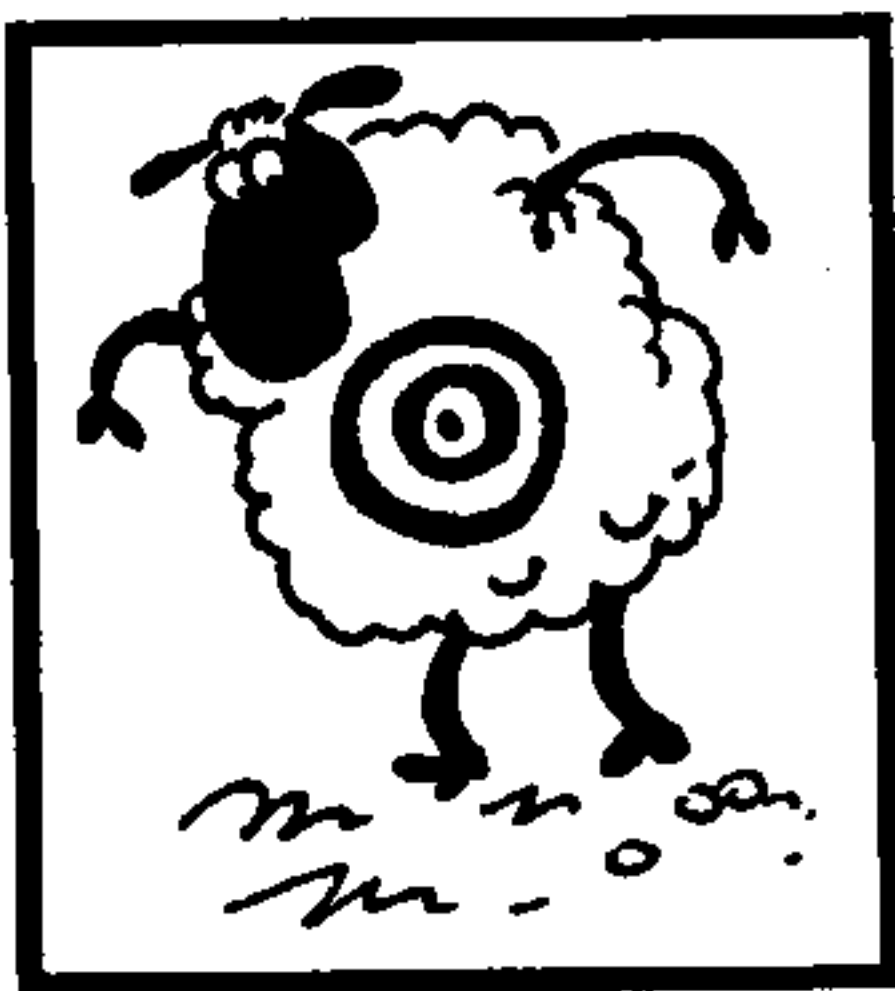
TONY BLAIR

USA Today (writing on how Britain is open for high-spending tourists)

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



"Our experts now think we should cull MAFF"



DOWN ON THE FARM

Foot and Mouth Special

Another Ewe Turn

FROM every corner of the land where the MAFFia is pretending to get the foot and mouth (FMD) epidemic under control, the stories pouring in are surreal beyond belief.

When a MAFF vet attended a meeting in Hay-on-Wye to explain why Gurkha sharpshooters were trying to pick off every sheep on the Black Mountain, he recalled that when he first saw infected sheep on a local farm in early March, they showed signs of having had FMD for more than a month. This was yet further evidence that FMD was already running riot through the national sheep flock weeks before the MAFFia officially recognised it in Essex on 19 February.

Whether or not the virus first escaped from a MAFF experimental farm, or that it was in fact an inspector from the MAFFia's own regional office in Carlisle who introduced it to those Heddon-on-the-Wall pigs on 25 January (having earlier been in contact with infected sheep in Cumbria), one reason MAFF has so totally cocked this one up is that the virus has always been so many jumps ahead of where the ministry thought it was.

MAFF officials persist in trying to apply "stage one" remedies, such as "ring-culling", to an epidemic which was already in "stage three" before they noticed it.

Typical of how the MAFFia has got everything about this shambles upside down was that one of the first major beneficiaries of its compensation largesse should have been the Devon sheep dealer Willy Cleave, recently reported as boasting in a Dartmoor pub about the £1.3m cheque he got for losing all his sheep around Hatherleigh, source of the epidemic which brought disaster to Devon.

Along with the Feakins brothers, whose farms brought disaster to Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Cleave was one of that small group of dealers whose movements of sheep around the country in the run-up to the 4 February deadline for matching up sheep numbers to those on which EU subsidies had been claimed unwittingly did so much to help turn the disease into a national problem.

But even these murky goings-on pale beside the MAFFia's subsequent record in reducing whole areas of the country to a state of terrified chaos with its orgy of indiscriminate slaughter. When the virus "jumped" 20 miles to a single holding near Jedburgh, the ministry immediately "cleaned out" 20,000 uninfected animals on 26 other farms nearby. But this only showed on MAFF's website as a single "case". The only thing which may eventually bring its holocaust to a halt is that it will run out of sufficient airfields and landfill sites in which to bury the millions of hapless victims (of the 1,000,000 animals so far killed, 95 percent were still perfectly healthy).

What MAFF should have done right from the start, of course, was launch the kind of nationwide vaccination programme the EU no longer allows (except in countries like Albania, where in 1996 the EU used modern vaccines to stop a serious FMD outbreak in its tracks in just three months). The only vaccination measures so far contemplated in Britain are the absurdly

limited emergency programmes sanctioned by Brussels for 180,000 cattle in Devon and Cumbria. But it was typical that when the MAFFia recently held a "training course" to teach vets, officials and farmers in Devon how to vaccinate (something most vets and farmers can already do in their sleep), the venue they chose was Hatherleigh. Seventy "training teams" were thus summoned from mainly uninfected areas to what, thanks to the activities of Mr Cleave, is probably the most heavily infected place in the whole country.

'E.N. Muckspreader'

● WILLIE CLEAVE, meanwhile, has been in court speaking up for a fellow farmer who pleaded guilty to 34 charges of animal cruelty.

Maurice Young faced charges relating to animals including calves, ponies, chickens, goats and dogs, at Tiverton magistrates' court on 30 March, after an RSPCA officer and the police visited his farm last

December. When the RSPCA began to remove the animals, Cleave turned up to collect a number of calves and ponies belonging to him. A statement from Cleave, who has known Young for 20 years, was read out in court by the defence counsel, Clive Williamson. He said that when he collected his animals he noticed the condition of the other animals on the farm and "none appeared to be suffering".

After the hearing the RSPCA's Tony Woodley described quite a different scene in which "animals were living amongst the bones and carcasses of dead animals". The case has been adjourned for a pre-sentence report, but the chairman of the magistrates, Frances Eastmond, said they are considering a custodial sentence for Young who has been prosecuted for animal cruelty three times in less than 15 years.

● THE Environment Agency has admitted that it does not yet know how it will dispose of waste from the mass foot and mouth burial pit under construction at Meeth, near Okehampton in Devon.

Up to 432,000 animal carcasses could be buried in clay-lined pits at the site — five fields recently purchased by the ministry of agriculture from the Meeth Clay Works Company. It will take at least several weeks for the bodies to putrefy in their sealed grave, and only then will tests be conducted to find out how best to get rid of the resulting effluent.

It has been suggested that as well as foot and mouth the dead animals could be carrying BSE and salmonella. Only once these have been tested for will experts from MAFF, the Environment Agency and vets be able to consider the options for disposing of the liquid waste. Meanwhile, the head of a multinational company specialising in the disposal of animal waste has written to MAFF to warn that its policy of burial could lead to a widescale environmental disaster.

Elliott Moorhead, chief executive of US-based NanoVapor, has warned that leakage from the mass graves could lead to problems such as nitrate pollution of the water supply, which can cause blue baby syndrome, a condition whereby infants suffocate internally. Future problems could be avoided by adding specially selected bacteria to the decaying waste, but MAFF does not yet appear to have considered this option. According to Moorhead's counterpart in the UK, David Manning, even clay-lined pits such as that planned at Meeth are susceptible to leakage.

● AN ADVISER to the government on the current foot and mouth crisis, Professor Roy Anderson, said on Channel Four News on 21 March that the epidemic was due at least in part to the reduction in veterinary disease surveillance by the current and previous administrations. How ironic, then, that on 17 January, one month before the first cases of foot and mouth were reported, the Scottish Agricultural Colleges (SAC) announced its intention to close one of its most important disease surveillance centres in Thurso, Caithness, covering the Northern Highlands and Islands.

The SAC said the cause of the planned closure was the cost of repairs needed to the post-mortem and incineration facilities; but local vets believe the real reason was the SAC's failure to adapt to the financial reality of no longer being entirely funded by central government. Instead it must rely for a large part of its income on farmers, who are reluctant to send animals to be tested at a risk to their own livelihood.

The overwhelming arguments against closing the Thurso centre were expressed by 30 vets from the region in a joint letter to the Veterinary Record. On 3



"Blair says if this doesn't work he'll definitely consider vaccination"

£5bn

■ estimated cost to British tourism of the foot and mouth crisis

■ size of Gordon Brown's war chest

crunching

April the SAC suddenly announced that Thurso would remain open after all, claiming that a £500,000 contract with the Orkney Islands aimed at achieving accreditation of freedom from bovine viral diarrhoea was behind the change of heart, although it knew about this all along.

The decision was surely influenced just as much by Andrew Campbell, who not only sits on the SAC's board of directors, but is also running the campaign against FMD in Dumfries and Galloway, where he is convenor of the council. It would not have looked good for Campbell if, while fighting livestock disease with one hand, he was helping close down a crucially important disease surveillance centre with the other.

Farmers Weekly

ACCORDING to a recent leader in *Farmers' Weekly (FW)*, countryside minister Michael Meacher is "almost touchingly naïve" in his faith in organic farming to feed the nation.

"Well, why didn't we think of it before?" it asks. "Let's turn back the clock 50 years, consign modern farm machinery, pesticides, veterinary health advances and high-tech varieties to the dustbin of politically incorrect history."

This petulant response has rather spoiled *FW*'s record of fair reporting on organic farming and research since the subject became unavoidable a few years ago. In asking why we didn't think of it before, editor Stephen Howe is either touchingly naïve or disingenuous. Who poured scorn on organic farming for 20 years? Who prevented anyone from considering it as a serious option, and stifled any debate on the direction farming was taking? Why, *Farmers' Weekly*, together with the even worse *Sun*-style rag *Farming News*, both of which are firmly under the control of their agribusiness advertisers.

The rest of the tantrum is baffling because organic farmers use pretty much the same farm machinery and the same crop varieties as other farmers; they can use "veterinary health advances" if necessary (although strangely, they rarely are), and pesticides and fertilisers of course not at all. Surely *FW*, in its admiration for technical excellence, does not think pesticides are an end in themselves? Presumably it would be better to do without if that were possible.

The irony here is that while *FW* frets about whether organic can produce enough food, many in government believe that we don't actually need any home food production at all. In playing the "productivity" card, *FW* has merely revealed that unreconstructed hardliners still lurk in the editorial suite.

Speaking of which... in the back of *FW* the voice of reason David Richardson has been on the same tack. Richardson has come a long way in recent years, and in particular is now at last an out-and-out protectionist; but he does have a big problem with organic farming, which he loathes. He himself is a leading advocate of Integrated Crop Management (ICM), the "middle way" of farming, and constantly whinges that organic gets all the attention.

The trouble with ICM is that it does not really exist at all; it is simply conventional farming which aims for a high standard of management. There is a new ICM column in *FW*, which is actually sponsored by agrochemical merchants Aventis! Have I given you a clue?

Consider the herbicide IPU, which contaminates water supplies to such an extent that Thames Water is trying to have it banned. Farmers have blamed recent high levels on the land on flooding — but never, of course, on those who use IPU on flood plains.

Richardson repeatedly claims that there are no benefits to consumers or the environment from organic farming. So does he use IPU in his ICM system? Yes, he does. Do organic farmers use IPU in their system? No, they don't. The case rests.

'Gumboot'

TIME TV

Dog Eat Dog (BBC1)
Parkinson (BBC1)

ONE of the most enjoyable parts of *Mastermind* was the ritual moment between rounds when Magnus read out the scores. The leader would nod with modest contentment, inspecting hands or shirt-cuffs, while the three trailing players gamely applauded their superior. For some of the more competitive contestants, this display of middle-class manners was clearly more of an ordeal than answering the questions.

Such subtexts of hostility and envy have always been part of the fun of television quiz shows. Now, of course, it's all text. If the contestant thinks a rival is a snob with bad-breath, they tell us so. As Anne Robinson floats *The Weakest Link* in America, Ulrika Johnson puts on the Rosa Klebb shoes for *Dog Eat Dog*, a quiz show which aims to humiliate the guests but which also takes a low blow at the hostess with a title which seems calculated to make Stan Collymore guffaw.

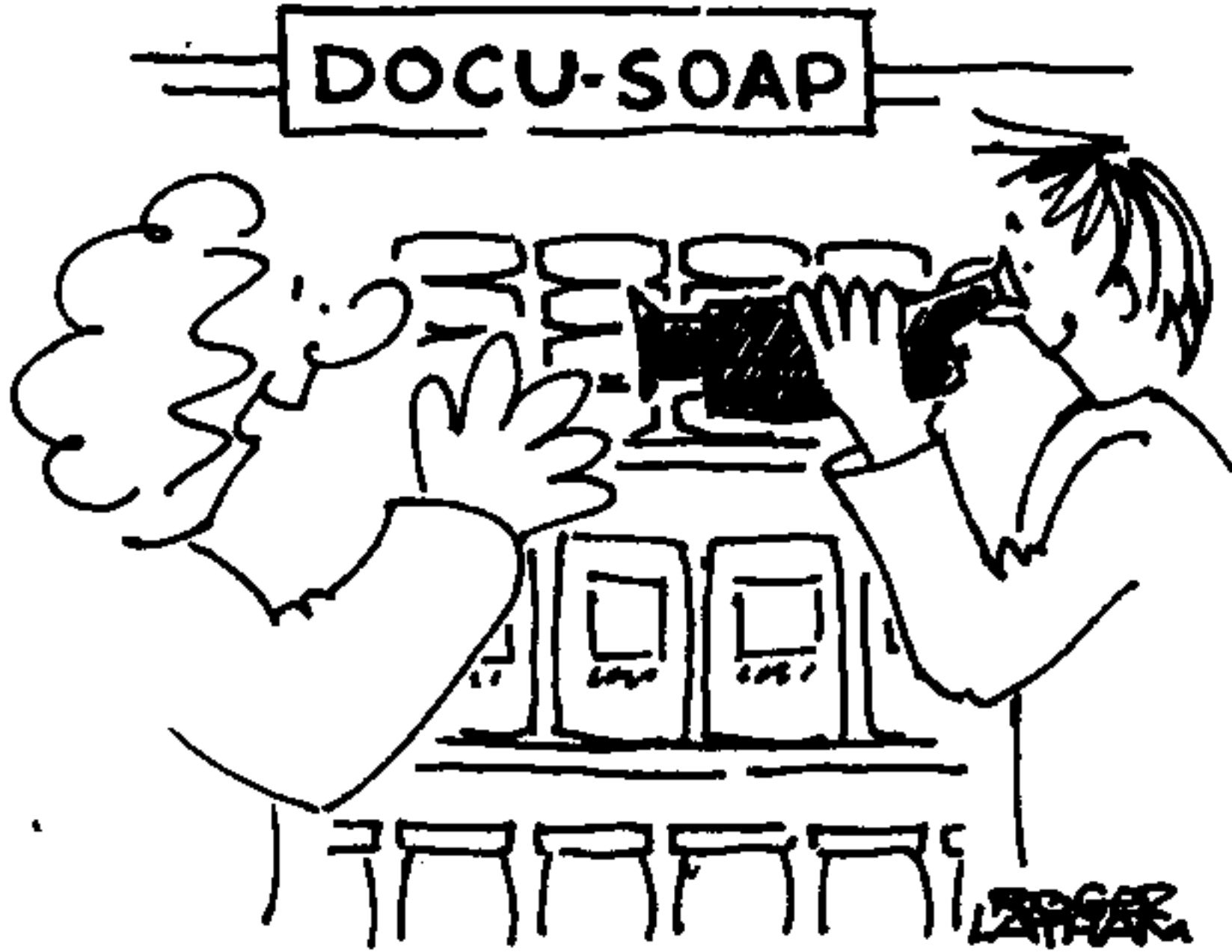
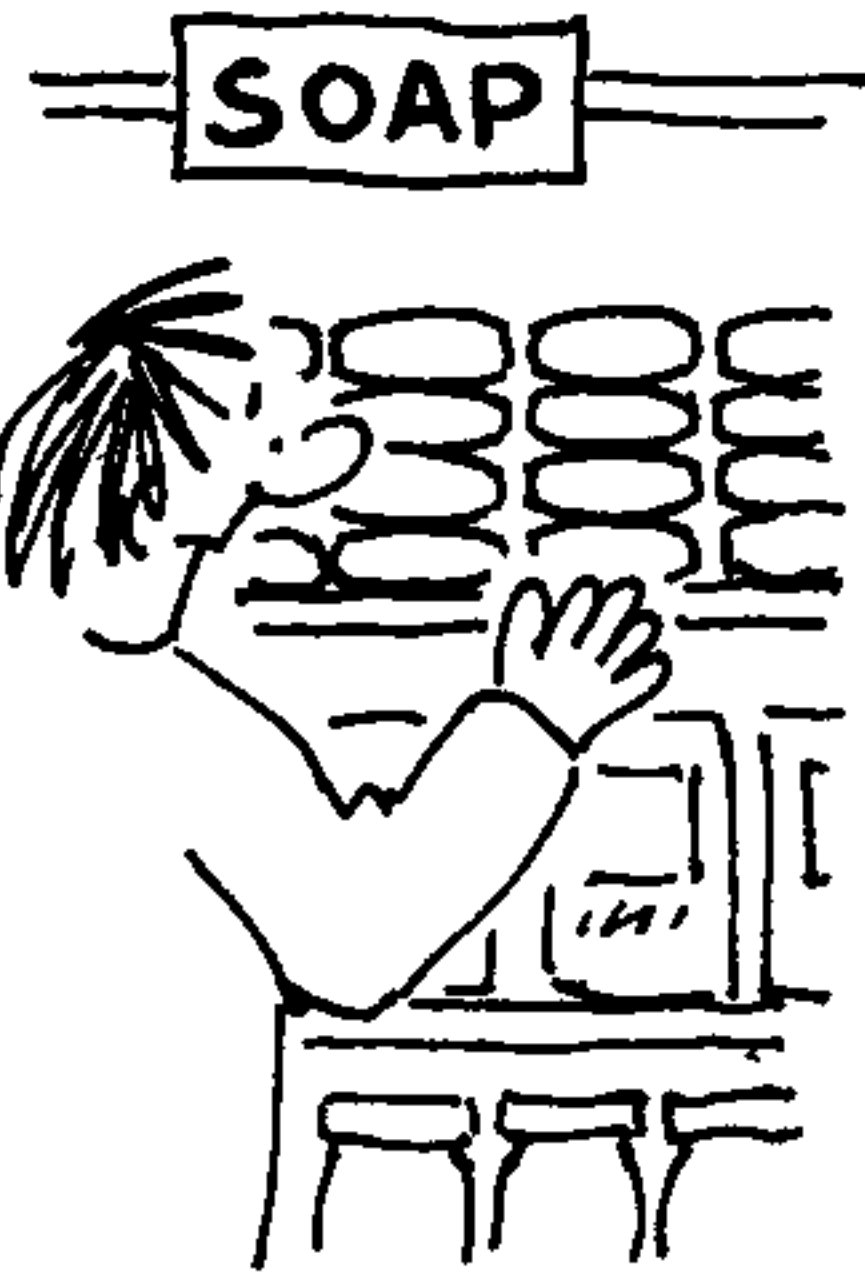
The merging of successful bloodlines to make new television series has often been compared to horse-breeding and there's no doubt that *Dog Eat Dog* is *The Weakest Link* out of *Celebrity Big Brother* with just a dash of *Millionaire*. The problem is that, in TV, this breeding system only ever results in donkeys which fall over.

In *Dog Eat Dog*, six people are sent away on a weekend in which they are set various tasks: from army assault courses to Mensa intelligence tests. They are encouraged to remember who does well at what. Back in the studio, they are set a series of similar tests but — and here's to you, Ms Robinson —

have to nominate the fellow player most likely to fail. If this weakest link, however, succeeds at the task, they can vote themselves back on to the panel to replace the person they most hate.

Eventually, one person has won £10,000 except — all together now — we don't want to give you that. The winner now plays a complex elimination game in which the five losers can get the ten grand back. What happens is that the winner nominates the loser — God bless you, Ms Robinson — who is most likely to get a quiz question wrong. But if, unexpectedly, they get it right, the loser takes the money.

Someone once said that all great ideas can be pitched in two



lines. *Dog Eat Dog* takes several pages to explain. It also feels horribly fake. Ulrika, who can never have imagined being asked to understudy Anne Robinson, comes across like Bambi trying to play Cruella De Vil when she reads lines like: "Your battle for survival begins now." The contestants, some of whom clearly fancy each other and wish this were *Blind Date*, have clearly been encouraged to be as vicious as possible about each other. But, in a reverse of what used to happen on *Mastermind*, the true story lies in the hugs and glances between rounds.

This was not Ulrika's only TV appearance of the weekend. The night before, she'd turned up on *Parkinson* to promote it. Her appearance was something of a surprise because *Radio Times* billed the impressionist Alistair McGowan. He, though, had plugged his own impending BBC1 show on John Inverdale's sports chat show earlier in the week and so the producers had decided he was cup-tied.

The loss of a guest due to plug a programme on the same channel might have offered an opportunity to bring in a totally different kind of guest but, true to recent form, they gave Ulrika the chance to plug her own BBC1 product. A once-great talk show is now perilously close to becoming an in-house trail.

Ulrika's presence also exposed Parkinson's other current weakness. Commendably chary of personally intrusive interviews, Parky is at his best with guests whose career is substantial enough to distract from the host's anachronistic failure to check if the interviewee shags sheep at weekends. Ulrika, though, is known for only a few bad telly shows and a gruesome private life: violent boy-friends, departed partners, a seriously ill child.

It was clear that Parky didn't want to do that stuff, but had been leaned on by producers from the new world of TV and also knew that he wasn't going to stretch her career to 20 minutes. His technique was to make vague statements along the lines of "you haven't been, ah, exactly lucky with men" and hope that it prompted an anecdote about how Stan smashed her up in Paris. When Ulrika resisted — on the impeccable grounds that she'd come here to plug her BBC1 series — you had a stand-off between a presenter too embarrassed to ask and a guest too embarrassed to answer.

The one insight to emerge was that Ulrika, with regard to men, has had a tendency to make bad choices. Anyone who tuned in to *Dog Eat Dog* the following night discovered that she is a pretty useless chooser professionally as well.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Tony Robinson Crusoe

• DUMB BRITAIN •

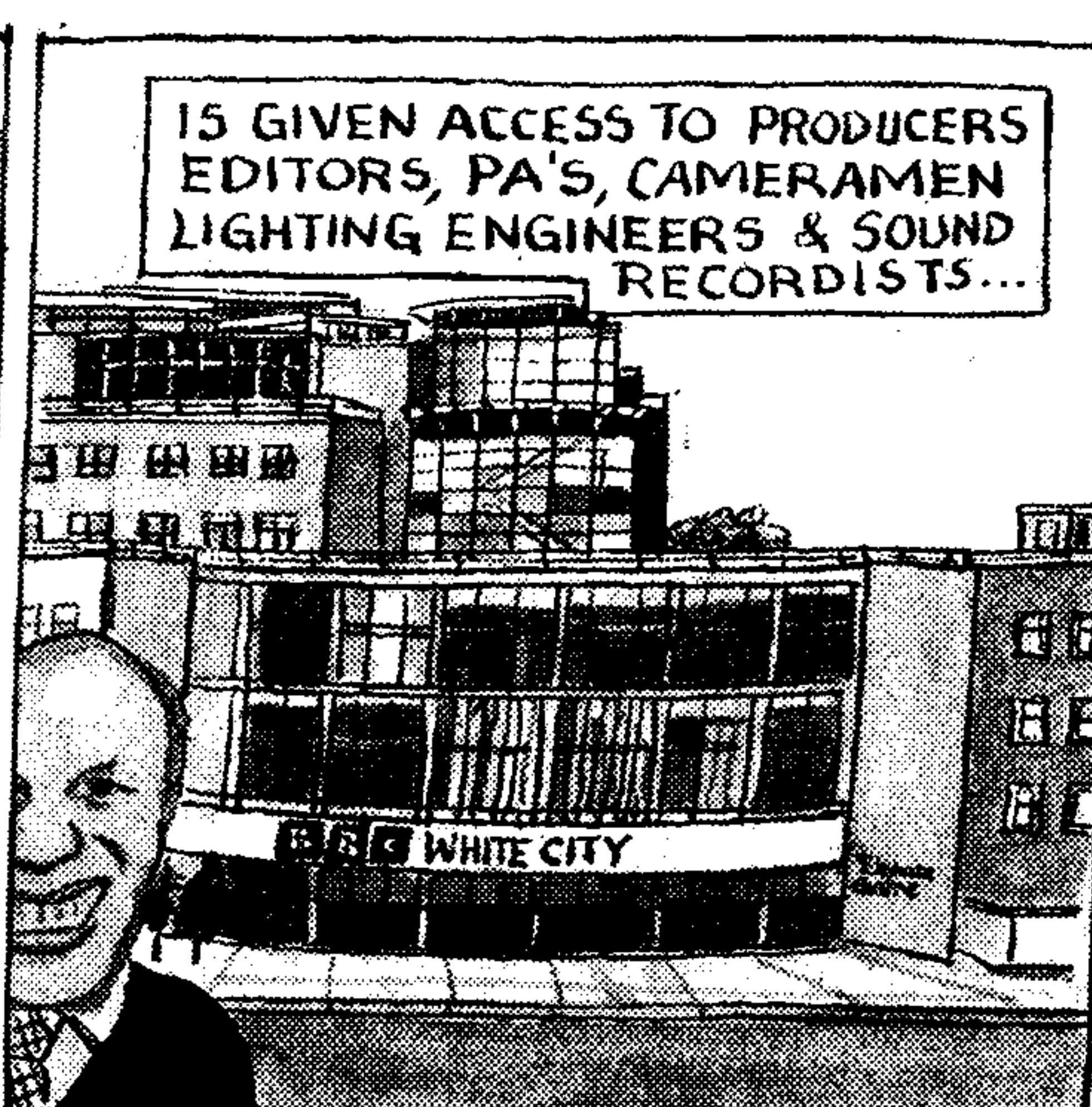
- *Midday Money*, ITV
- **Richard Madeley**: Charles and Edward were children of who?
- **Contestant**: Diana.
- **RM**: Who did Britain go to war with over the Falklands?
- **Contestant**: Er...
- **RM**: It's a South American country.
- **Contestant**: Iran?
- **Judy Finnegan**: What is the capital of Italy?
- **Contestant**: Pass
- *The Weakest Link*, BBC
- **Anne Robinson**: What French word did Karl Marx use to describe those who oppressed the working class?
- **Contestant**: Trotskyists.
- **AR**: What distinguished prize did Albert Einstein win in 1921 for his work in physics?
- **Contestant**: The Booker Prize



• THE WEAKEST WINK - LATE EXTRA!

ANNE ROBINSON — overpaid and over there — has already managed to get one answer wrong in her much-hyped first *Weakest Link* appearance in the United States.

In answer to the question "how many sequels were made to the film *Lethal Weapon*?" she agreed that the answer three was correct. But surely some mistake? There was the original *Lethal Weapon*... followed by two sequels, *LW2* and *LW3*.



IN a "shocking" exposé of celebrity stalking that had already appeared days before on the BBC and in all the newspapers, "the country's top investigative journalists" at *Tonight With Trevor McDonald* used their "unbeatable news-gathering resources" to find out "just what type of person is likely to become obsessed with celebrities".

So who are these sad people, fixated by celebrities like, say, soap queens? Er... many of them, it seems, must be working in the team that produces the "strong and original journalism" that has now become the hallmark of *Hello! With Trevor McDonald*.

Why else would the show serve up such a diet of pap; stories including "Daniella's US drug detox bid" (29 March); "Daniella's Baby Joy" (26 January); and pop "stars": "ITN looks at Eminem" (9 February)? And don't forget footballer's wives - Alex Best was "by his side as ever" when George Best entered "the Last Chance Saloon" on 14 April.

MEANWHILE someone in BBC Online's "news" room must be an *EastEnders* fan. Alongside the headline "British teacher convicted of manslaughter of 13-year-old pupil: More Soon" and "Senior Islamic Jihad man killed by booby-trap bomb" came this breaking "story" on 5 April: "Lisa revealed as culprit in *EastEnders* shooting: More Soon".

There was also an audio-visual feature on "Who Shot Phil" that had been carefully trailed on the "news" page for two days. Meanwhile Online's "Top UK Story", ahead of the headline "TB outbreak getting worse" was confirmation that "Lisa is *EastEnders* culprit".



GOOD to see that the BBC's cigar-chomping, £250,000-a-year business editor, Jeff "Essex Boy" Randall, is bolstering his meagre salary by moonlighting as a columnist for his old newspaper, *Sunday Business*. And Jeff, who in his previous incarnation was a scourge of BBC profligacy, isn't stinting himself on the perks either.

"BA's new business-class sleeper seat is a marvellous innovation," he wrote in *Sunday Business* two weeks ago, after flying to Washington DC to cover talks between a CBI delegation and the Federal Reserve. "It's a quantum leap in airline comfort and is well worth the significant cost of refurbishing an entire wide-bodied fleet." And, no doubt, well worth the £3,350 cost of a club-class return - even if, with a bit of judicious searching, he could have travelled economy for £350.

Does his belt-tightening boss Greg Dyke approve of Jeff's apparent conversion to the merits of lavishness? Dyke himself recently decreed that no BBC staff could spend more than £55 on a hotel room. In a fit of generosity he has now upped the limit to £65, but whether even this will be enough to satisfy Randall's tastes remains to be seen.

LUVVIES

• AT THE OSCARS •

"It's like having a baby, it's like a wedding, it's like suddenly jumping out of a plane."

TOM HANKS
Guardian Review

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Lookalike

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the similarity between the picture of Elton John on the front of the *London Standard* (Wed, 11 April) and the *Weakest Link* publicity shots of Anne Robinson? Are the queen of stage-managed temper and Anne Robinson actually the same person? I think we should be told...

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD RYAN,

Ashford, Kent.

THE internal inquiry into the TV Centre bombing continues. Pressed to explain why CCTV pictures of the bombers parking their cab by the front entrance were too pisspoor to use, the general manager of "premises management" dismayed staff with his revelation that "our cameras are not intended to monitor outside of our premises". So what's the point of them?

Meanwhile, communication between managers and staffers due to come in to work after the bombing turns out to have been less than ideal. Nobody bothered to phone either the news editor or the deputy editor and two staffers actually walked into the shattered building before the penny dropped.

JUST FANCY THAT!

Due to a fire in the main block the fire drill at 3.05 in stage 6 has been cancelled!

— Email to staff from Graeme Reid-Davies, executive editor BBC Sportsnews, 4 April.

BIRTSPEAK

"RECOGNITION means that, following an assessment by an external IIP Assessor against the Investors in People Standard (which is on the website), an organisation will be deemed to be employing good management practice in terms of the Standard. Companies that are recognised receive the IIP Award and plaque. However, the Award is symbolic of the fact that the company has been observed to be demonstrating best management practice... rather than an end in itself."

— Linda Butcher, BBC "Management & Organisation Development Consultant", explaining the Investors in People Award.

GOING LIVE



THE BBC's *Ten O'Clock News* went live to Matt Frei in Hong Kong on 5 April for the latest on the captured US spyplane. "How have the Chinese reacted to Colin Powell's statement?" asked Peter Sissons.

"It's the middle of the night here and there has been no reaction yet," Frei replied.

There was more exciting live coverage from reporter David Willis standing in front of a darkened runway in Hawaii on 12 April, just about the time the freed US spy plane crew touched down hundreds of miles away in Guam.

With no pictures other than of Willis standing in the dark, *Breakfast News* presenter Sophie Raworth had to use her initiative. "Will the Americans be able to get their plane back?" she asked.

As Willis replied: "That's a very good question, Sophie..."

Pseud's Corner

Tito Perez, personal styling assistant
"He's my assistant in the world of hairdressing, but he has ended up being involved in the rest of my life, doing things like driving my car or entertaining my kids. He doesn't do styling yet, but he is allowed to do some of my blow drying."

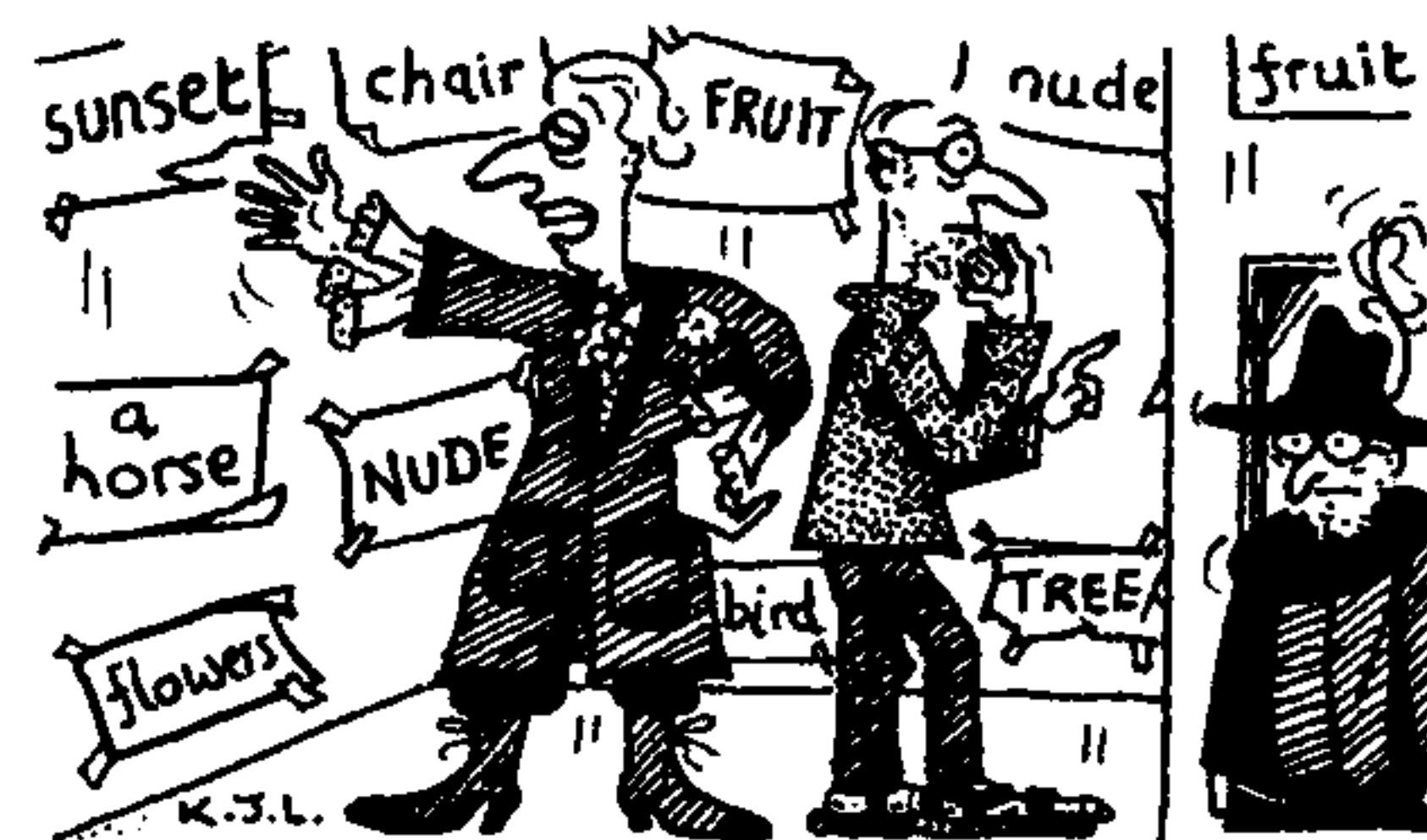
NICKY CLARKE
Observer

I have always believed that education fuels and drive progress in our society - which is why I go on teaching. An evening at King's reassured me that we academics are still on target to change the world.

LISA JARDINE
The Times

ART WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT

A new art exhibition in Birmingham has left visitors truly baffled. Instead of framed works



and sculptures for art lovers to gaze upon, organisers have kept the 2,500 sq ft hall devoid of exhibits so that visitors have to imagine what they might look like. Artist Ana Benloch said: "We have no real works of art in the exhibition, but there are some descriptions of paintings and sculptures written by our members which have been stuck on the walls. Visitors can read them and imagine what the paintings or sculptures would look like."

METRO

Our aims are:

- to name the possibility of creativity, success and transformation
- to release these possibilities into our community
- to explore the connections between diversity and to facilitate movements in and out of our communities
- to create spaces where innovative and integrated solutions to local issues can be discovered
- to broker the relationships as well as the economics of our community, delivering a holistic process of regeneration
- to reflect the significance and insights of local, community experience into the wider public policy contexts

Extract from Annual Report of Bromley by Bow Community Centre

What is Diet Coke?

It's quirky qualities, a sense of humor, and a sense of style.

It's his love handles, small of her back, and someone who listens.

It's commitment, courage, and being who you are. We'll see you inside.

On-line advertisement,
New York Times

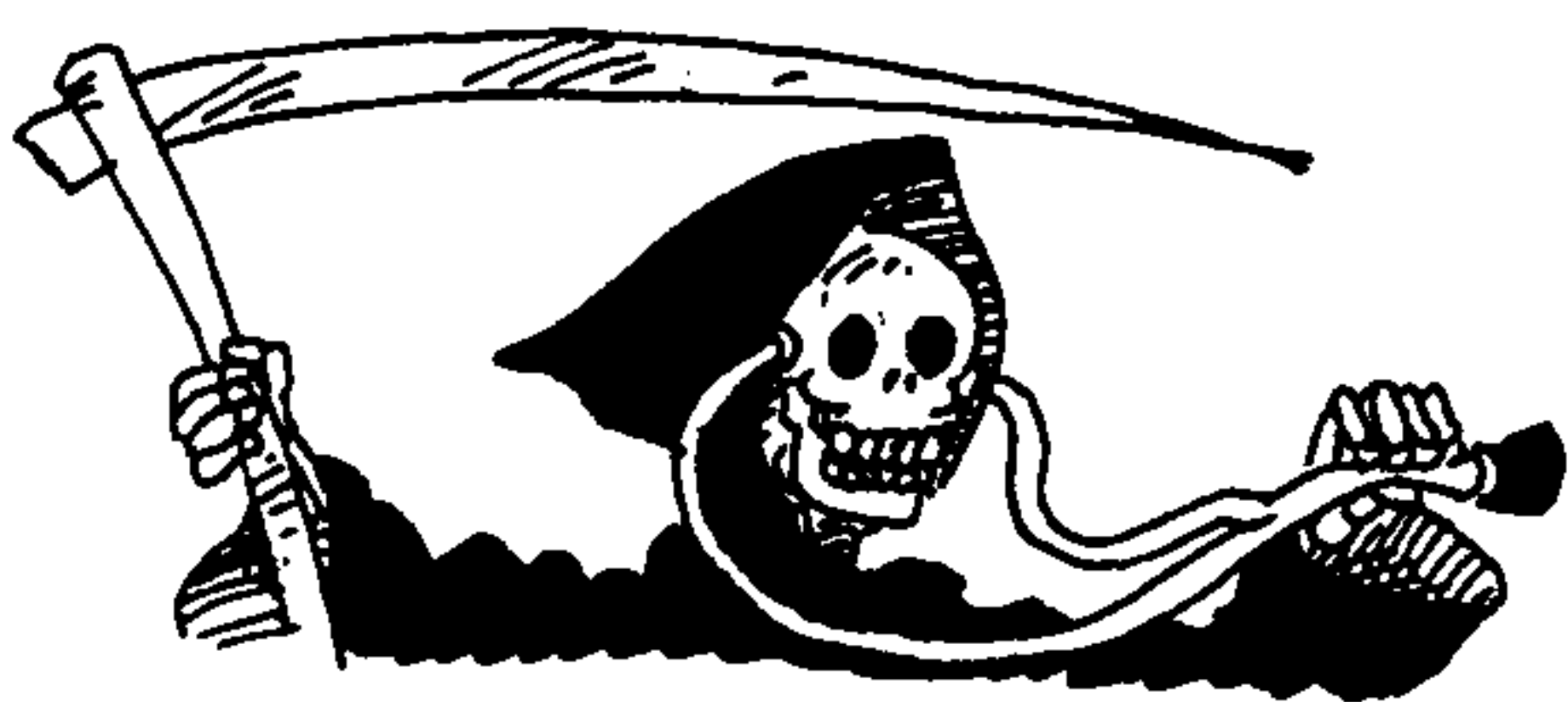
I am one of around 700 senior business leaders who contributed to a survey about which book had most inspired me and influenced my career.

I picked EM Forster's *Howard's End*, which explores the literal and figurative marriage between "masculine" qualities of progress and control and "feminine" qualities of empathy and emotional intelligence. For me, management in the new millennium is also about balancing these two themes - meeting functional targets of production, while connecting with staff and customers. As Forster himself put it, "only connect".

BEVERLEY HODSON,
WH Smug boss
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: Edward Lindsay, R. Pastor-Castro, Alan Davis, Pauline Black, D. Marsden, Ron Binns.

£10 paid for entries



DOING THE ROUNDS

Spot the GP

THE government's promise of 2,000 extra GPs as soon as possible seems to be falling on deaf ears – at least in Wales. Not a single doctor has applied for the Swansea GP training scheme, due to start in August; and the Brigend scheme has yet to find "a single suitable applicant".

The health minister John Denham recently tried to reassure GPs at the NHS Alliance spring conference that the NHS plan "should not mean a single doctor will have to work harder. If it does, then we have failed." Alas, not a single doctor agreed, and all present claimed to be working much harder.

Neither was anyone impressed by health secretary Alan Milburn's offer of a £10,000 "Golden Goodbye" for any poor sod foolish enough to hang on to 65. According to actuarial statistics, GPs who work till 65 tend to die by 68, whereas those who get out before 60 live, on average, to 78. So bribing clapped out doctors to stay behind the wheel another five years actually saves the treasury a small fortune in pensions.

One sick doctor

HOSPITAL doctors too seem to be cracking under the strain. A diagnostic radiologist ("name and address supplied") has written the following letter to the trade mag *Hospital Doctor*: "There are a substantial number of patients out there who are unutterable execrable... They are in the main at worst trivially unwell. They need no attention (apart from a good slapping) but insist on being seen. I have a mental image of revenge – turning to a most loathsome specimen, smiling thinly while declaring 'You've got cancer you bastard – die soon'."

Clearly the GMC's insistence that all doctors "empathise with their patients" still has some way to go...

Many sick doctors

THE government's national clinical assessment authority (NCAA) was launched this month to help identify (and retrain) "underachieving doctors". It claims that it will give doctors a "fairer and faster" resolution of complaints against them – but there is already a backlog of 250 doctors on suspension in the UK so it will have its work cut out.

Even the General Medical Council accepts that

there could be 13,000 drug or alcohol-dependent doctors out there, waiting to be discovered. The British Medical Association (BMA) does not trust the government to help medical addicts, and if they were all suspended the NHS would fall to pieces overnight. But the profession's own record in this area is pretty lamentable.

BMA ethics committee member Dr Michael Wilks has been lobbying hard to get the BMA to take addiction seriously, but with little progress: "I have had little success in getting the BMA, the GMC, royal colleges and medical defence bodies to get investment in a scheme similar to the American Impaired Physicians Programme.

"In the US and Canada, 85-90 percent of addicted doctors are sober and in work five years after treatment. The Priory would kill for that sort of result. There is also evidence from California that recovering doctors are sued less often than the rest."

Given that we have so few doctors in the UK, it seems absurd that such a programme isn't up and running in the UK. Perhaps the only hope is for addicted doctors who fall foul of the NCAA to cancel their subscriptions to the BMA and royal colleges until they act. If the stocks in the wine cellar start to fall, they'll soon take an interest.

Publish or be damned

HURRAY for the postponement of the election. At least it means the Bristol inquiry report – initially due out last year, then postponed to the end of the year, then absolutely definitely promised to be delivered by the end of March – can now be released to the public and allow hundreds of parents to try to resolve their grief.

Or perhaps not. The inquiry press office has conveniently announced a further delay. "It is not quite ready yet, but we do expect to be able to pass it to the Secretary of State during the month of May." No explanation is given for the latest lapse, but as a department of health spokesman put it: "I am not aware that it will come out before the election." Well fancy that!

Whistleblowing works

PARENTS demanded a public inquiry yesterday after an investigation all but accused leading heart surgeons of discriminating against children with Down's syndrome.

The inquiry was set up after an anonymous whistleblower made allegations to the magazine *Private Eye* about the treatment of Down's children.

The Daily Telegraph reporting the results of the Royal Brompton inquiry, 3 April.

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES

Investment, investment

THE strategic rail authority's (SRA) decision to hand the 20-year South West Trains franchise to Stagecoach is bad news for passengers everywhere: it completes the SRA's U-turn since chairman Alastair Morton said new franchises would be "all about service to customers and investment, investment, investment".

Stagecoach's appalling treatment of its customers – it even threatened to sue some for libel (*Eye* 1009) – has been catalogued ever since its horrendous driver shortage emerged soon after it took over SWT. Announcing the new franchise, the SRA trumpeted an investment of £1.7bn (£85m a year). Much of it will go on new trains to replace ones that should have been scrapped for safety reasons by 1998.

Interestingly, the SRA forgot to say how much Stagecoach would invest; how much subsidy it would pay for a service that was almost profitable under British Rail anyway; or that £1.7bn is only about one-third of the investment proposed by Sea Containers (owner of GNER).

Sea Containers mistook Morton for a man of his word and his "investment" pledge for an element of strategy. Its bid for SWT included a tunnel to take Waterloo trains to Tottenham Court Road or King's Cross, plus a new Clapham Junction station on a more spacious

site. Cities like Paris made similar improvements years ago, but the SRA doesn't want significant additions like tunnels. Instead of being rebuilt, Clapham Junction (Britain's busiest station) will get "a new overbridge or upper concourse with lift or escalator access to platform level" – all by 2007. Wow!

The SWT deal is also worrying for passengers elsewhere because it shows the SRA, after an auspicious start, doesn't care how each bidder has previously performed and follows the Tory dogma that cheap bids are better than expensive ones. Thanks to the "new" Labour treasury, the franchising process may degenerate into a rerun of the first franchise round with bidders vying to undercut each other's bids.

The government still boasts of a £60bn investment in rail but, with the exception of the Channel tunnel line (more than 10 years late), it seems the investment will do little more than modernise the Victorian rail network.

● **THERE was pandemonium when the last *Eye* hit the streets announcing that Virgin was soon to raise train fares by 9 percent.**

Such increases are routine for Virgin Trains as it struggles to keep its suicidal franchise deals of 1996 afloat. But when the media got excited about the next fares rise, Virgin had a fresh excuse – Hatfield.

Railtrack had compensated Virgin for half its losses, so the rest had to come from passengers' pockets. Funny that, after the rail industry's solemn promise last autumn that the costs of the post-Hatfield

AD NAUSEAM

To bring one of the world's most disreputable industries "into disrepute" takes some doing, but according to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), last week those crazy cats at TBWA, led by our friend Trevor Beattie, did precisely that.



For persistently, deliberately and rather tediously flouting the rules set up by advertising's various self-regulatory bodies with their lame pun "fcuk", all French Connection poster ads now have to be pre-vetted. This is unlikely to change a thing: all the vetters (a melée of powerless quangocrats called the Commission for Advertising Practice) are so-called advertising experts, which means the admen will be judged by more admen. And admen tend to go for a bit of rule-breaking: they call it creativity.

So look out for more fcuking funny puns on the word fuck, that delicious wheeze "masterminded" (meaning he didn't think of it) by our Trev. But if it's real entertainment you're after, the various adjudications by the witless and impotent ASA on the whole affair make for much amusement, with French Connection tending to feign utter mystification that anyone could confuse fcuk for fuck, especially in a sentence like "One humungous fcuk".

At other times Beattie and co become almost blasé in their piss-taking. In May 1999, posters braying "all night long" appeared with the fcuk logo, plainly referring to some sort of sexual marathon. French Connection helpfully explained that "all night long" meant "French Connection sells clothes that can be worn all night long" and went away sniggering.

So we're all agreed that Trev and French Connection are very clever in continually pulling a fast one over a self-regulatory body that relies for its efficacy on those under its jurisdiction not pulling fast ones. Certainly the rest of the industry just love the way he's making their lives more difficult with his every stroke of genius.

But when it comes to people putting one over Trev, suddenly his sense of humour disappears. In December 1999, a canny internet consultant registered the domain name "fcuk.com", and French Connection applied for an injunction, claiming that the nerd was exploiting the "goodwill" that had been built up around their campaign (which by this stage had already garnered copious complaints). A high court judge quickly dispensed with this tosh: "How can you talk about goodwill in connection with such a tasteless and obnoxious campaign?" he said, adding that fcuk was simply "a euphemism for the obscene expletive."

And just last year some rum coves parked a mini-van outside TBWA's offices, emblazoned with the line "What the fcuk is this?" The whole thing was designed to promote a new kind of portable ad space to the agency. But once again TBWA was strangely lacking in "goodwill", instead rewarding such admirable ingenuity with the threat of legal action.

crisis would *not* fall on passengers.

Virgin and Railtrack struck a deal several years ago to share revenue increases on the west-coast line. So, having ostensibly forced the fares increase, Railtrack stands to gain more income from it. What a fantastic incentive for Railtrack not to get its act together!

With an election looming, the government appeared concerned at the big fare rises and even pretended to take action against them. But if it really is concerned at the relentlessly rising cost of Virgin Trains – half owned by Stagecoach – then how come it has just awarded SWT to Stagecoach with no new controls over fares? And why are ministers trying to get Virgin on to the east-coast franchise when Virgin's undercutting of GNER's bid would be funded by massive fares increases?

'Dr B. Ching'

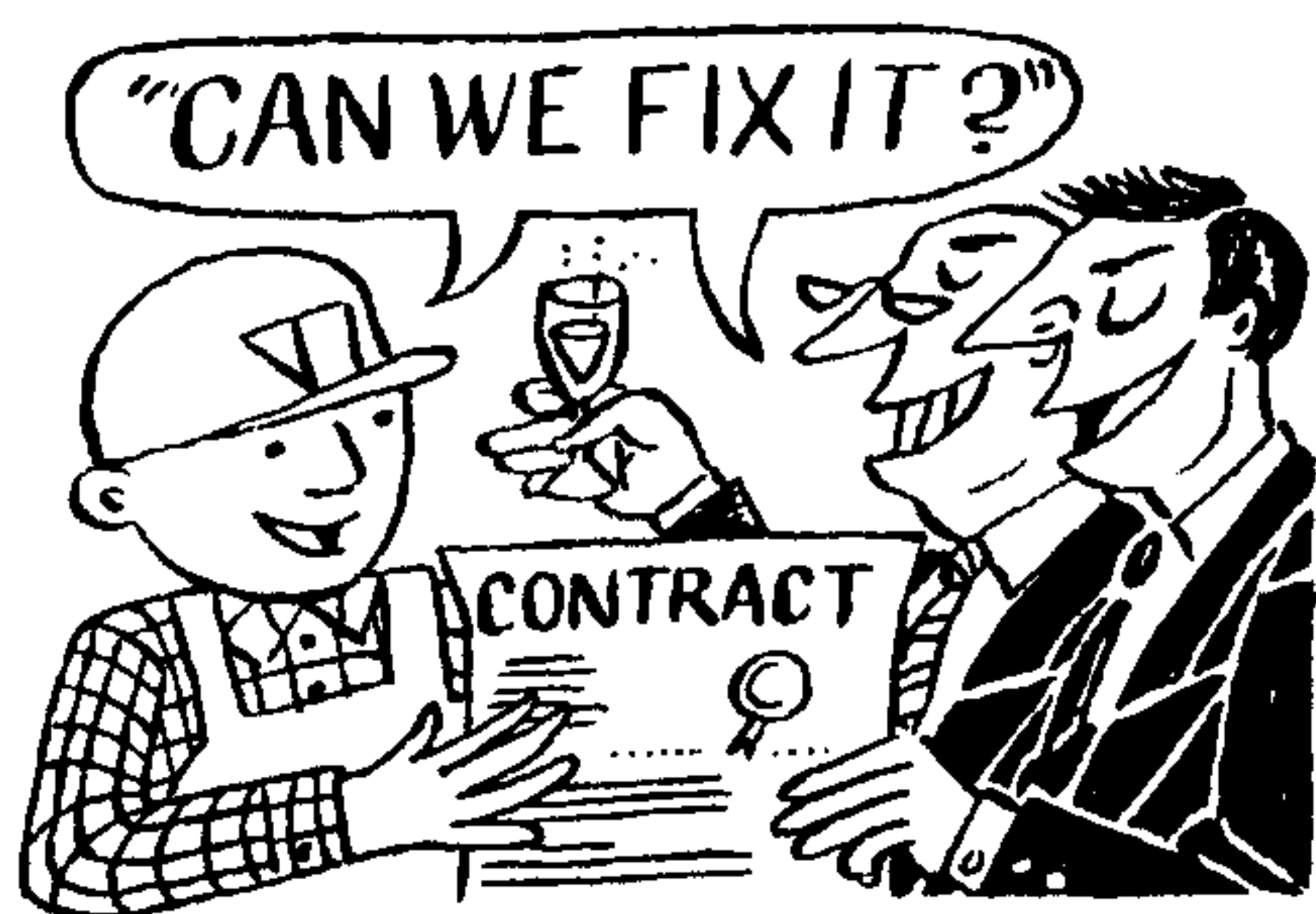
Number crunching

£1.5 billion

■ Government bail-out for Railtrack, April 2001

■ Railtrack profits since privatisation in 1996

ROTTEN BOROUGH



CAPITA SUM

OUTSOURCING specialists Capita began the new financial year in style by overpaying 20,000 housing benefit (HB) claimants in Lambeth after running an incorrect computer program.

The recipients will receive letters explaining the cock-up – and that the HB system will have to close “for a few days” while the error is rectified. A special team has been set up to try to sort out the mess and find out whether the money is recoverable – probably not. At least it makes a change for claimants from living in fear of eviction because Capita has not processed one’s paperwork on time.

Meanwhile Lambeth has agreed to pay more than £1m to another private “service provider”, TeamLambeth, after it was discovered that poor drafting of contracts had left the council exposed to potential liabilities of £1,843,864, plus hefty legal bills. More than £1m of that figure is accounted for by the cost of purchasing Lambeth’s famous wheelie bins (*Eye* 1025). Lambeth assumed that when TeamLambeth said it would “operate” a wheelie bin service it meant it would pay for the bins. TeamLambeth meant no such thing.

● **ANOTHER** striking example of the benefit of public-private partnership comes from Swindon, where the council’s HB and council tax services were flogged off to another *Eye* favourite, WS Atkins, in November 1999. Atkins’ inability to process claims in a reasonable time led last month to the council issuing an eviction notice to a lorry driver with terminal bone cancer because, it claimed, he owed £400 rent on his warden-controlled council accommodation. Donald Brown, 44, had not been able to pay because his application had still not been processed eight weeks after being made. The council has now withdrawn the eviction threat.

BEHIND OPEN DOORS

AT LEAST schoolchildren and their parents can breathe a sigh of relief in Haringey, where WS Atkins (see above) came second in the scramble of private firms to win the contract for the “strategic management partnership” of the borough’s education service. However, the contract has instead gone to... Capita!

Meanwhile Capita, in the guise of “Education Leeds”, has already started work after taking over the city’s LEA before the Easter hols. Leeds United boss Peter Ridsdale began his part-time post as chairman of

Education Leeds by promising a new culture of “openness and transparency”.

Teachers, parents and education staff got a taste of what he meant within days of the takeover. Where the former elected council education committee had adhered to the outmoded concept of letting press and public attend its meetings, the first session of the “open and transparent” new board was held behind closed doors with press and public excluded.

● **COUNCILLORS** on the Isle of Wight went into secret session at their last full meeting to avoid public outrage at one of the council’s fat cats getting the cream he has craved for some months.

Director of environmental services David Jaggar, 53, has successfully lobbied behind the scenes to be allowed to take early retirement. He feels, however, that the £26,000-a-year pension, plus £80,000 lump sum, to which he is entitled is insufficient to keep him in the style to which he is accustomed. Never one to underestimate his own abilities, Jaggar has negotiated an extra £5,500 on his pension and another £16,000 on his lump sum. As one of the few dissenting councillors observed, Jaggar won’t have to live much beyond his three score years and ten to have cost the Isle of Wight taxpayer an extra quarter of a million quid.

DIARY DATE

THE ambitious Frank McKenna’s brief reign as leader-elect of Lancashire county council has come to an end. He and fellow county councillor John Fillis have been summonsed to appear before Shrewsbury magistrates court on 17 May. Both are charged with conspiracy to defraud. McKenna faces a further charge of perjury.

McKenna has been replaced as leader-elect by Cllr Doreen Pollitt. He has also stood down as leader of the North-west regional assembly and from jobs on a number of local quangos. The charges follow a long police investigation which began after *Eye* 987 reported concerns of irregularities in the finances of West Lancashire constituency Labour party.

Local MP Colin Pickthall, who was also reported to the CPS, faces no further action and has been reinstated as home secretary Jack Straw’s PPS, with a gushing letter of praise from Jack. McKenna – aka “The Emperor” – is not at all pleased about this.

COMPLIANT CANDIDATE

Q: WHAT happens to disgraced City types drummed out of their jobs after involvement in huge financial scandals?

A: They stand for election as Liberal-Democrat councillors!

In 1996 Peter Young, former manager of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell’s \$850m European Growth Fund was accused of committing a £220m fraud (see *Eyes passim*). More than £100m was allegedly diverted into Sol-vex, a dodgy “oil recovery” company, while £350,000 was siphoned off to help Young buy a grand house in Buckinghamshire.

The newspapers were diverted by tales of Young’s spending sprees on bulk orders of condoms and his “romps” with West End call girls. He was eventually found unfit to stand trial after turning up in court dressed as a woman and claiming his name was Beth.

In 1997 DMG was fined a record £2m for its failure to control Young. As part of the fallout DMG’s director of compliance, Michael Wheatley, lost his job

and was banned for life from ever holding such a role again by the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (Imro).

The voters of Guildford East will no doubt be heartened to learn that this upstanding figure – now writing a PhD on the Troubles in Northern Ireland – is to be their Lib Dem candidate at the forthcoming county council elections.

JUST FANCY THAT!

21 February: Middlesbrough council chief executive John Foster informs former councillor Chris Snowdon that he is banned from attending council meetings for six months because he refuses to stand up for the mayor.

4 April: *Eye* 1025 on sale. Rotten Boroughs reports on the illegal ban and notes that the hire of private security guards has cost council taxpayers at least £2,000 so far.

5 April: Ban unconditionally lifted with more than four months to go.

High Principals

ONE question hot on the lips of college principals is whether the new Learning and Skills Council, which came into being on 2 April, is as keen on selling off the family silver as its predecessor.

In July 1999 the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) hosted a presentation of property development opportunities in the further education sector at London’s Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, where more than 100 property companies came to drool over the development potential of city centre campuses (see *Eye* 994).

In January 2000 it was revealed that Oaklands College in St Albans was drawing up plans to sell off a large chunk of its city centre campus, and to relocate the engineering and construction departments to the outskirts of the city, which would involve building on green belt land (see *Eye* 997). At the time the college told the *Eye* that the move had been proposed because “the buildings are those we inherited on incorporation and are not suitable for current further education requirements”. It maintained that the plans had nothing whatever to do with a cut in funding from the FEFC, “in fact we received an increase in funds from the FEFC for the current year”.

By September 2000, however, the college principal, Liz Cristofoli, had announced that she would be leaving at the end of the academic year, and in November 2000, the college accounts revealed that Oaklands was £800,000 in the red, having overestimated student numbers when applying to the FEFC for funding. Whether the plans to move out of the city centre, much speculated upon in the local press, deterred potential students is not clear; but on 3 January Cristofoli wrote to staff telling them that more than 50 full time lecturers would be made redundant in an attempt to cut the staff budget. After the college’s two branches of the lecturers’ union, Natfhe, passed a motion of no confidence in the senior management, a trawl for voluntary redundancies produced the required number of staff cuts.

Oaklands remains secretive about the state of its planning application, but the advert for the £90,000 a year post of principal, which has gone to Helen Parr, currently the head of the Colchester Institute, refers to a £32m building programme.

SICK LEAVE

THE recently departed principal of Barnsley College, David Eade (see *Eyes passim*), was on paid sick leave for 12 months before the college governors finally persuaded him to resign. Following in his footsteps, Eade’s former wife, Maisie, is currently on six months paid sick leave from her £40,000-plus job as head of business and management services at Park Lane College in Leeds.

Eye readers will recall that it was Maisie’s children who set up a surfing magazine funded by a £21,000 loan from Progress Training, a franchising company set up by Eade to market Barnsley College’s distance learning programme, which is currently the subject of a financial investigation by the Learning and Skills Council after it went into liquidation in November 2000. Last month Maisie appeared somewhat embarrassed when she was spotted at Leeds-Bradford airport by a fellow member of staff at Park Lane. She was about to fly off to Malaga with her sister, the *Coronation Street* actress Liz Dawn – presumably to aid her recovery.

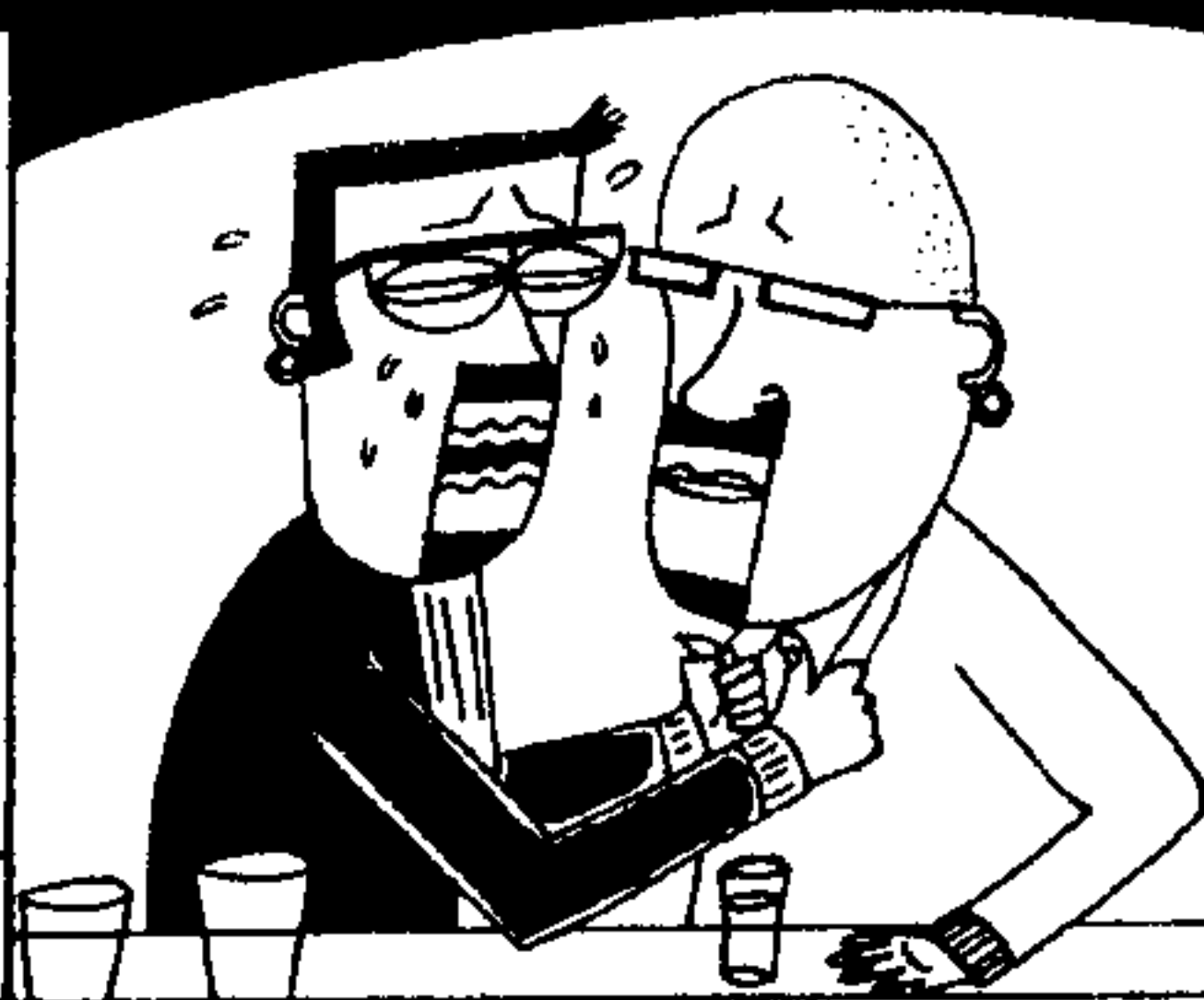
IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER

YOU KNOW SHE MEANT EVERYTHING TO ME – SHE WAS MY UNIVERSE, SHE MADE MY LIFE COMPLETE...

THE PLACE IS SO EMPTY WITHOUT HER... SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO SEE THE WORLD...

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, QUIN. WE ALL KNOW HOW TOUGH IT IS TO LOSE A GOOD CLEANING LADY



MAN IN THE EYE

DAVID LOCK

ONCE again David Lock, the Labour MP for Wyre Forest and parliamentary secretary to the lord chancellor, has chosen to target the small man fighting for justice.

The *Eye* recently reported the reaction of the litigious Mr Lock to an article in the left-wing weekly *Tribune* about a new

organisation: Health Concern, now the largest party on Wyre Forest district council, made up of supporters of the campaign to save Kidderminster Hospital which has been downgraded in favour of a private finance initiative (PFI) to replace the dilapidated Worcester Royal Infirmary (*Eye* 1023).

Lock threatened to sue the group's vice-chairman, Frank Baillie, who was quoted in the *Tribune* article as saying that the MP had gone "for promotion instead of standing side by side with the people of Wyre Forest", and forced him to make a grovelling apology printed in the local papers because the council's insurers could not meet the costs of a libel action.



For *You*, a local magazine with a circulation of 25,000, reprinted the *Eye*'s write-up of these events as part of a longer article in support of Dr Richard Taylor, a retired Kidderminster doctor, who is standing against Lock as an independent candidate in the general election. On 12 April Aardvark Associates, the small company which publishes *For You*, received a telephone call from David Lock demanding an apology, substantial damages and the withdrawal of the magazine.

He objected in particular to the observation: "It is a racing certainty that an Independent MP who will truly represent the wishes of the people is about to be elected"; and to the suggestion that "the success of local health policy can be measured in a directly proportional increase in business for local funeral directors, resulting from the increased travelling time to A&E services in Worcester", which he appears to have taken personally.

Lock has been busy protecting his reputation on all fronts after becoming involved with an internal row between Health Concern councillors over the allocation of a new council house to one of their number, Rachel Lewis. A second Health Concern councillor, Ron White, resigned from the group last month claiming that Cllr Lewis had jumped the housing queue. Ms Lewis, who has been temporarily suspended from Health Concern over the issue, maintains that she was given legitimate priority on medical grounds by Wyre Forest Community Housing, the private company which operates social housing in the area.

On 3 April the chief executive of Wyre Forest council, Walter Delin, wrote to Lock to express his grave concern over a leaflet circulating the Queensway Estate in Bewdley, to which Cllr Lewis is due to move. The flyer called on local residents to assemble outside the property in protest against the housing allocation, "to show their anger", on the evening of Thursday 5 April. It referred to the "strong support" given to the protest by Lock and Cllr White, and stated that both men had been invited to attend the property at the given time to demonstrate this support.

Delin made his opinion of the matter perfectly clear. "The leaflet is not only inaccurate, but also appears to be designed to incite aggression and hatred towards Councillor Rachel Lewis over the allocation of 2 All Saints Avenue, Bewdley," he wrote. He continued: "I am also advised by Wyre Forest Community Housing that there is no evidence of any serious irregularities relating to the allocation or any other matter concerning Councillor Lewis." He further informed Lock that the matter had been referred to the police with a request to investigate a possible offence under the public order act 1986, or the protection from harassment act 1997, and asked for his confirmation that he had dissociated himself from the leaflet and was taking steps to prevent the assembly taking place.

The demonstration went ahead on 5 April, but although Lock sent a message of support, he was for some reason unable to attend.

NOOKS and CORNERS

FIFTY years ago in 1951 the Festival of Britain took place and the Royal Festival Hall opened. In that same year another remarkable modern building was completed: the Brynmawr Rubber Factory.

No, it didn't manufacture those sorts of rubbers, but things like lilos and bath mats. As an idealistic venture, an attempt to bring employment to the depressed valleys of South Wales, it failed; but as architecture it was – and is – superb.

Designed by the newly-established Architects' Co-Partnership, it consists essentially of nine concrete shell domes, each 80 by 60 feet in span, creating an open interior which is a glorious architectural space. It may not be saying much, but the Brynmawr Rubber Factory is the finest modern building in Wales and it was listed in 1986.

I have written about the building before (*Eye* 886) as the determination displayed by the local authority to destroy it is something truly wonderful. The factory, eventually owned by Dunlop, became redundant in 1982 and the first attempt to demolish it was thwarted by a public inquiry in 1986. Since then, while concerned outsiders have tried to find a future for the thing, those in the valley have been content to watch it decay, looking forward to the day when this "visual scar and an embarrassment" could be replaced by a nice new supermarket, or factory, or something.

Anyone with the slightest imagination can see the structure could easily become a magnificent hypermarket, or sports hall, or business centre. But imagination is not what drives Blaenau Gwent borough council. Last year most of the councillors were expelled from the Labour party because of problems over expenses, but the officers are still in place.

Meanwhile, matters in Brynmawr are now approaching a final crisis. Listed building consent has been granted for the demolition of the factory subject to detailed planning permission being granted for a new development. The Welsh national assembly has permitted the Welsh development agency to pay £3.5m for the demolition of the huge building and, at present, the asbestos is being stripped out of it (it is being dumped in the adjacent lake).

The site is owned by something called Maincourse and the developer is Brunswick, but there is no potential retailer in sight and no detailed planning application for a new development has been submitted. In desperation Blaenau Gwent has just granted an extension of two years for the submission of an outline planning application – and demolition work has begun.

The chief executive and others have long screamed that interfering foreign conservationists are blocking the chance of new jobs coming to Brynmawr, yet there are no jobs on offer. The council has had five years to find a user for the redeveloped factory site and failed. So now government – ie public – money has been granted for the demolition of a building which the government has recognised is of outstanding architectural importance, to make way for a hypo-

thetical development which almost nobody wants.

The only beneficiary would seem to be the demolition contractor. And if demolition continues, despite the absence of detailed planning permission for a replacement building and without all other options having been fully explored, the precedent for other listed buildings is alarming.

What is really absurd about this blinkered vandalism is that the wider picture has changed. Rhodri Morgan, Wales's first minister, has twice been asked to order a temporary halt to demolition plans to allow Regeneration Through Heritage (part of the Prince's Foundation) to work with the local community to establish a strategy for the regeneration of the rubber factory. And the money to do something positive is now available.

Blaenavon, the mining village which has just been made a world heritage site, is only five miles away; the whole area has been designated "objective one" by the European union; a new tourism policy for South Wales

is being established, based on the celebration of the industrial heritage, and heritage lottery money is available for this. Brynmawr, with its unique modern industrial history, fits easily into this picture.

To destroy Brynmawr's greatest asset now is madness. CADW, the Welsh equivalent of English Heritage, is being as useless as ever, so the only hope now lies with Rhodri Morgan. Is the first minister prepared to help Brynmawr's modern monument or will he be content just to give added credence to the widespread belief that Wales is a land in which no building of beauty is safe and anything goes?

HARE Street House in Hertfordshire was the home of Robert Hugh Benson, the Edwardian writer, Roman Catholic convert and brother of all those other famous Bensons. When he died in 1914 he left the rambling Georgian house and its beautiful gardens to the Archbishop of Westminster and his successors as a retreat.

The late Cardinal Basil Hume was particularly fond of the place and opened it up to the clergy of the diocese for rest 'n' relaxation. Archbishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor does not like it, however, and wants to put the house on the market. He is also chucking stuff out of Archbishop's House, Westminster, the building so beautifully and subtly designed by Bentley as a complement to his cathedral, and he hopes to move to a nice suburban house at Mill Hill, next to a golf course.

Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor will probably only be an ornament to London for five years or so, yet he is happy to deny to his successors and his clergy the pleasure and privilege of using fine and distinguished buildings. So much for vision and a sense of continuity. It seems sad that the only way this trendy posturing asset-stripper can demonstrate how different he is from his predecessor is by ruthlessly and belatedly embracing the philistine, suburban values of the 1960s.

'Piloti'

Calista Flockhart (Ally McBeal) is Looking For A London Home

I DON'T WANT TO MOVE TO A DANGEROUS AREA

ESTATE AGENTS

HOW ABOUT HERE..... THERE'S HARDLY ANY RESTAURANTS!



Letters



Identity crisis

Sir,
A few weeks ago two men impersonated electricians for the purpose of robbing me. Is there a law against this? If so, why is it not employed against the increasing number of journalists who take false identities to gain the confidence, for monetary gain, of celebrities?

Yours faithfully,
ALEX DAHN,

Bangor.

Dead smart

Sir,
Your Just Fancy That! item in Eye 1025 surely misses the point. The reason farmers do not insure their animals is because they know they will receive compensation. That is why insuring is "not worthwhile".

Yours,
JO SHORTALL,

Via e-mail.

Read the label

Sir,
Like Mr Alan Villiers (Letter, Eye 1025) I'm the parent of an autistic son who developed the classic features of severe autism after an early infancy with no indications of any abnormality. This was at the beginning of the 1970s, when the condition had become sufficiently well recognised to be described in books on childhood development available in my public library, from which I was able to identify my son's illness. He was subsequently seen by a variety of specialists at St George's Hospital, Tooting, and the Atkinson Morley Hospital. Despite showing the marked characteristics of profound autism there seemed to be a wilful avoidance in using that term in diagnosis, and he was merely described as "suffering from a disorder of the nervous system". It seems doubtful to me that he would have been entered at the time in any official statistics as being autistic. Since then the concept of the "autistic spectrum" has been developed and it now appears to have reached the stage where people who are "shy" or mildly awkward in their social relationships are being labelled autistic/Asperger's. No wonder there is now reported to be a huge increase in "autism" and since cases like my son's inevitably rise around the age when immunisation is carried out it is no wonder that a connection will be made between the apparent increase and the introduction of MMR. I am sceptical whether there has been any change in the real incidence of the condition, merely a far greater readiness within the medical and allied professions to apply the label "autistic".

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN DEAR,

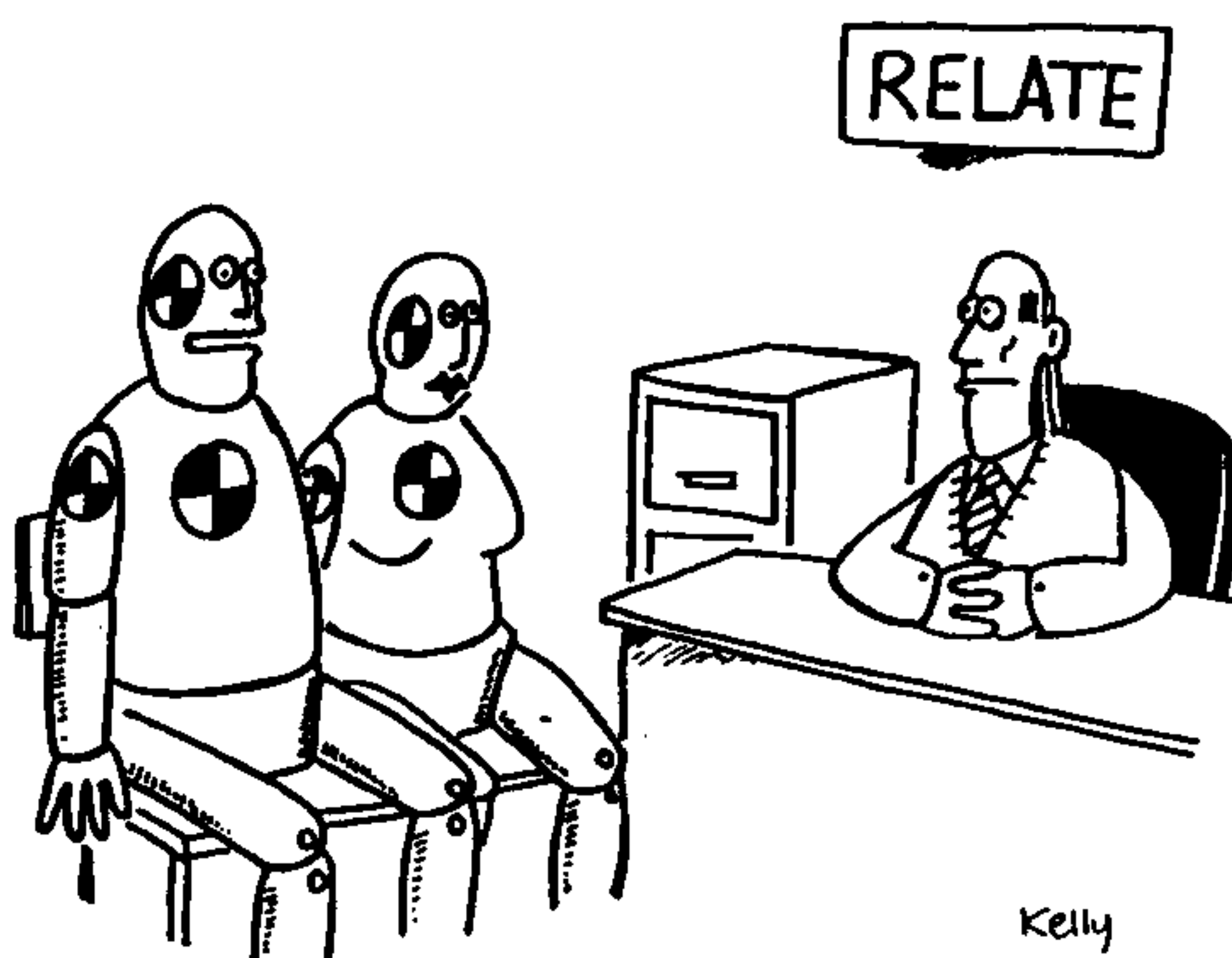
Sutton, Surrey.

Kray-ven

Sir,
The BBC documentary on The Krays was even more "disgraceful" than Square Eyes knows. On Tuesday 27 March on BBC1 10 O'Clock News there was a clip from the bedside interview presented as news. A week later I'm still trying to figure out the "news content" of that item. Alternatively, we can expect in future regular ads for BBC "serious" programmes in its news bulletins. You used to have a column showing instances where Murdoch's various organs promoted each other. Are you going to have to do the same for the BBC?

Yours etc,
FRANK DESMOND (no relation to Richard),

Via e-mail.



"... and she constantly criticises my driving..."

Fan mail?

Sir,
Your latest edition carries an article attacking Mr Al-Fayed, yet again, this time targeting him via Fulham Football Club. Doubtless briefed by an anti-FFC body of local residents styling themselves the Fulham Alliance.

If the welfare of local residents, who will be affected by the development and which the council and football club have acknowledged, is really being ignored then why did Fulham FC attempt to alleviate these problems as much as possible by a year-long consultancy process which resulted in the plans being altered to reflect legitimate concerns and offer to meet with the Alliance only for it to be made quite clear that the only solution the Alliance would settle for was Fulham FC leaving their 104-year-old ground for good?

The local residents, incidentally, do not number anyone among their ranks who have owned their houses for over 104 years, leaving me wondering why, if they are so terrified by football supporters (of whom Fulham's have a reputation for excellent behaviour) did they purchase their house knowing that a bunch of scruffy oiks would be frequenting the area roughly 25 times a season?

Yours,
DECLAN McCABE,

Luton, Beds.

Smart attack

Sir,
The instantaneous answer "Tart" to Anne Robinson's question: name the title of Madonna's 1990 tour "Blonde what?" deserves better than listing in "Dumb Britain". As a put-down to AR and Madonna it's hard to beat. Similarly, I would hope I would be as quick to answer "Patricia Routledge" if asked "which actress named Pat is married to actor Nicholas Cage?" I take it the answer was wrong? Is it dumb not to know who Nicholas Cage is? Hats off to them both.

TIM LYNCH,

Via e-mail.

Smoking salmon

Sir,
As there is no salmon farming in England or Wales, the issue can be said to be a Scottish one. As Old Trout obviously despises us (the term "Jock" is generally considered derogatory) why the concern for our environment? Considering that London is an open cesspit barely fit for humans and not noted for its salmon fishing, it seems strange that you are so concerned about the West coast of Scotland. If there was an oil spill here would you even mention it? The Eye's concern for our environment seems to begin and end with fish farming. Rattling on about a subject few in your readership will know anything about and will therefore not be in a position to confirm or contradict is a cheap method of saving on journalistic legwork. Fish farmers have to submit to the scrutiny of ten separate statutory authorities but any attempt to regulate the press would be considered an assault on democracy and freedom of speech and righteously opposed by yourselves and others.

As with the vast bulk of the hysteria churned out by O.T. and his little friends, a story has been produced out of nothing and blown up to full scale conspiracy theory courtesy of urban journos now so technologically right-on that they seldom have to leave the bar.

Your organ is quick to pounce on other papers that pad out their pages with recycled news but Old Twat's tedious space filler contains nothing but.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN MORRISON,

Sutherland.



Access all areas

Sir,
First of all, I am not part of some homogenous group labelled "the disabled". As a disabled person, Pilotti should have the good manners to refer to "disabled people".

Secondly, it is tiresome to keep reading that entrances/seating arrangements/housing/employment opportunities etc should be "discreet". Why? Am I that much of an embarrassment to society?

Finally, if my wish was to be insulted, then I would turn to the tabloids.

Anyway, keep up the good work!

BARRY SMEATON,

Via e-mail.

Money talks

Sir,
I couldn't agree more with Ad Nauseam's lambasting of a recent sad procession of tedious investment ads (Eye 1024). But then... shurely home mishtake - is that a full-page Hendersons ad I see before me in Eye 1025. "Commercial reality" - now there's an uplifting thought!

Regards,
MARTIN GRIFFITHS,

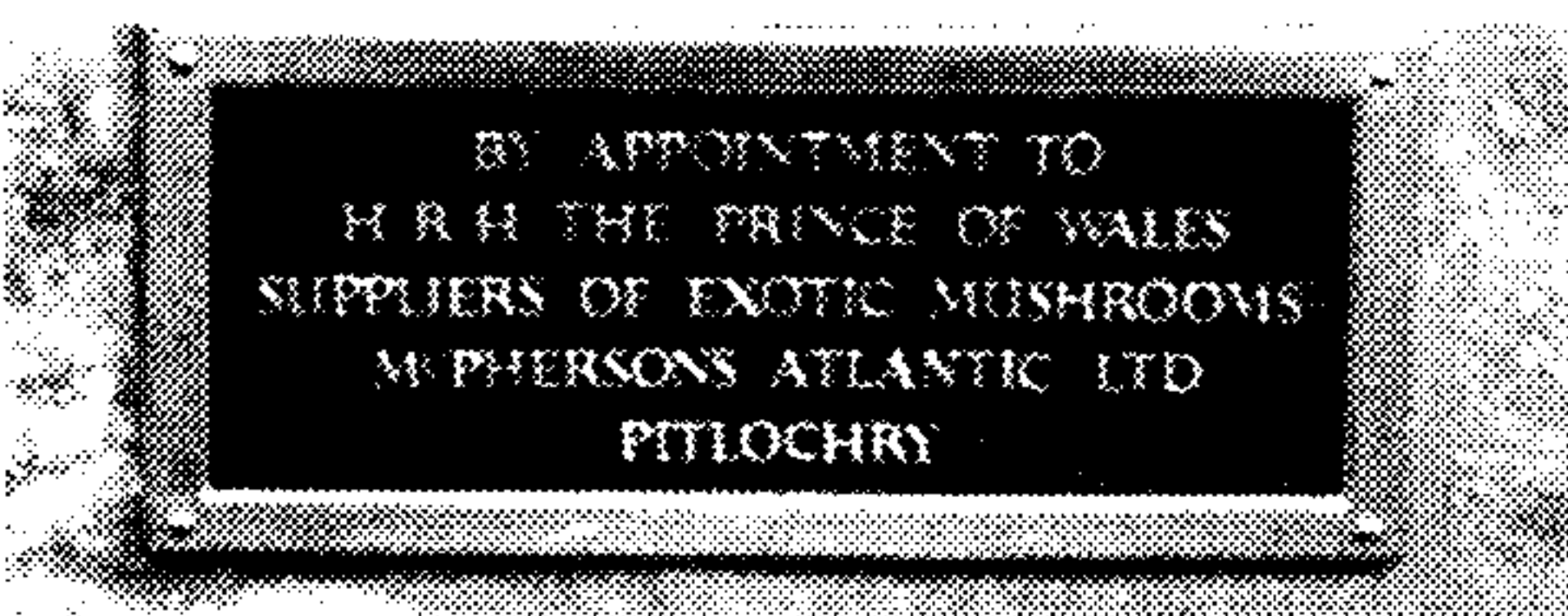
Via e-mail.

SUPERMODELS

K E R B E R



I-SPY Pitlochry, Scotland



Submitted by Jane Flynn. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

Bum notes

Sir,
Talk about bum notes from Lunchtime O'Boulez! (Music & Musicians, Eye 1025.) It's a good job we musicians perform with greater accuracy than his writings.

Firstly, St Endellion isn't in North Devon; try North Cornwall instead.

Secondly, Dame Gillian Weir didn't play in St Giles Cathedral; she played in St Mary's Cathedral (and it wasn't a concerto she was performing, but the organ part of a 19th century French composition).

One can only assume that O'Boulez's definition of a bar is of a liquid rather than a musical nature.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS NICKOL,

Glasgow.

Sir,
Have we gone mad or has Piloti made an embarrassing slip? In a piece on the Express Lift Tower in Northampton (Eye 1025), he placed it 80 or so miles further north, hence: "With some intelligence and enterprise, the Lift Tower could become one of Nottingham's major assets". Wouldn't that involve a great deal of effort, and wheelbarrows heaped with cement? Maybe drinking sherry is affecting the minds of two thirty-year-olds, but no more than usual.

Yours expressly,
SIMON BROWN and SCOTT GRIMSEY,

Via e-mail.

Sir,
So the one million shares in Psion which David Potter sold last year for £66m (Stock Horror, Eye 1025) are only worth a paltry £22bn? How disgusting that they have only gone up a mere 33,000%. Can I have some please? Do I get £10 for spotting it, with which I could run out and buy 11 and a half shares in Psion? And does Piers Morgan know about them?

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM WRIGHT,

Via e-mail.

● Whoops. The figure should not have read £22bn, but £4.5m. This would have made sense of Mr Potter's dealings. Apologies for spectacular typo. Ed.

And the team of specially trained soldiers who have been taught to kill humans for a flat monthly wage, may get extra cash for the slaughter.

Mid Devon Star

Number **£2.7bn** *crunching*
stolen from former Yugoslavia
by Slobodan Milosevic –
Britain assisting hunt for
stashed money
£2.7bn
stolen from Nigeria by former
dictator General Abacha – Britain
obstructing hunt for stashed money



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Sara Cox: So, do you notice anything different about me this morning?

News Anchor: Ummm... You're wearing the same t-shirt as yesterday?

Radio 1
(Mark Pim)

"To be a great game, one of the teams has to score first."

MARK LAWRENSON, Radio 5 Live
(Andrew Thompson)

"A lot of people have said that fibre is good... but if you look carefully at all the studies, the evidence is not so solid."

DR ROBERT GOODLAD, Daily Telegraph
(Mark Lenel)

"We thought it was a foregone conclusion, and then it wasn't a foregone conclusion, but then it was a foregone conclusion again, and what a foregone conclusion it was."

GRAND PRIX COMMENTATOR,
Channel 5
(Max Thowless-Reeves)

"To be honest, I can't remember him scoring a goal that wasn't memorable."

JEROME ANDERSON, 5 Live
(Julian Simpson)

Letter from Hanoi from Our Own Correspondent

IT'S PARTY congress time again and our Communist leaders are getting ready to venture forth from the provinces and head for Hanoi where they will celebrate beer, women and the homegrown, Ho Chi Minhist strand of Marxist-Leninism, more commonly known elsewhere as naked capitalism.



The congress happens once every five years and involves an orgy of ideological rectitude – for a few minutes in public – and alcoholic depravity the rest of the time.

There is important business to be done. While the ideologists churn out absorbingly catchy slogans such as "Socialism with a Reliance on Market Mechanisms", the apparatchiks have to discuss the deals and kickbacks that will sustain them and their mistresses until 2006. The other issue that bothers those on the inside of the magic circle, of course, is who's in and who's out. Not that it makes any difference. Our leaders are so ancient and anonymous that it is really a question of: the general secretary is dead (he might as well be): long live the general secretary. This time round, we hear, the party is going for youth. The octogenarians will have to make way for the septuagenarians.

Whoever comes out on top, the Americans will doubtless be there to cheer him on – and despite our revolutionary commitment to equality, a him it will surely be. If it is a woman we'll eat our collective conical hats. Not satisfied with bombing us to dust, the yanks are now determined to suffocate the party with love.

The arrival of young George Bush has ended any hope of Washington honouring its commitment to human rights here. The US ambassador – and former air force pilot – Pete Peterson, has long been the Communist party's most ardent and effective defender. "Vietnam is a success story," he'll tell the world, "the economy is opening up and they have more television sets than ever before."

During the war Peterson spent several years in prison here. We don't know what his guards did to him but it certainly worked. The reeducation camps could not boast a finer or more committed graduate. Maybe it's just guilt for all the bombs he dropped. But there is no denying he has hit upon a winning formula. His support for the party bosses pleases not only his host government, but also corporate America. Countless US executives are desperate to prove that, since they can now make so much money here, it was Uncle Sam who won the war after all. Maybe they're right.

We Vietnamese have no reason to be surprised by anything America does. Even so, our friends across the Pacific can still take the breath away. President Clinton paid a visit recently. He travelled with 2,000 people, three planes just for his phone calls (one had to be in the air at all times) and God knows how many armour-plated cars. The trip cost \$80m. America's aid budget to Vietnam is \$4m a year.

We are well used to such ironies. For the last decade the US army has doled out over half a billion dollars scouring rice paddies for the remains of some of the 58,000 Americans who died during the war. Anyone could tell them that there's nothing left: our ubiquitous rats will have seen to that. We are told they do occasionally find a chip of bone. Apparently the US army considers a piece more than two centimetres long to be a major success. And in the ultimate symbol of pointlessness, this month a conflict that ended 26 years ago claimed 16 more servicemen – nine of ours, seven of theirs – searching for more fragments of American corpses when their helicopter crashed in Qang Binh.

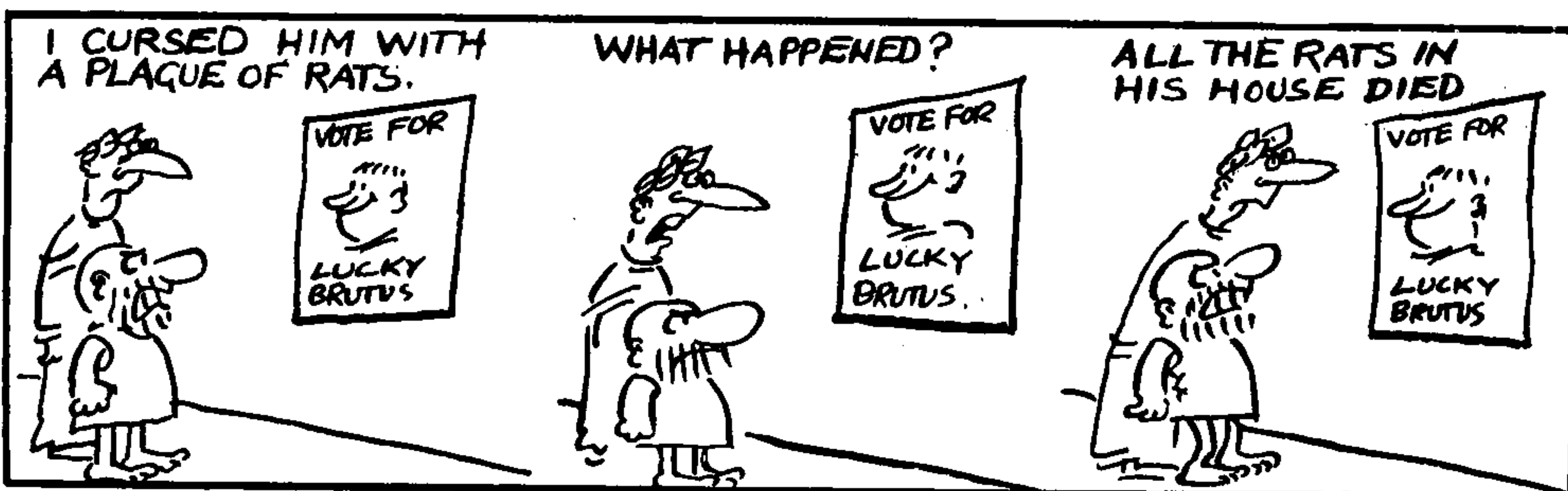
Needless to say, we Vietnamese, who lost three million lives, can't compete with such thoroughness. Families who lost loved ones generally end up asking fraudulent clairvoyants where to look. At least it's cheaper.

The French exploited us. The Americans bombed us. The Russians ruined us. Now, global capitalism is taking away all we have left: our human decency and pride. And to think we who have stayed once had the chance to join the boat people!

HOM SAP



AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● "I'm proud to be a cannibal. My brother is a cannibal, and my father is a cannibal. His father was a cannibal as was his father's father," Ssande Sserwadda told Chief Magistrate Isaac Muwata in a packed court in Luweero. "We are a family of cannibals, we always have been, and I feel queasy if I go too long without tasting human meat. But just because we like to eat human flesh, does that mean we're bad people?"

Sserwadda, a twenty-three-year-old factory worker from Luganda, was defending himself after being arrested for trespassing on a burial site, contrary to section 114 of the Ugandan Penal Code Act. "None of us has ever killed anybody, that would be immoral. But we like our human flesh, and we don't see anything wrong in digging up corpses and eating them, after they've been buried. We don't like to see the meat going to waste. And we always wait at least a week after the funeral, out of respect to the relatives, and also because the meat tastes much better once it's matured. I have personally eaten parts of seven corpses in the past year, but my brother is the really greedy one. He's eaten dozens."

After Sserwadda had been convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment, he stunned prison warders by asking if he could take with him the human leg bone which had earlier been shown in court as an exhibit. "It's still got plenty of meat on it. It's a shame to let it go to waste." He picked his teeth at the judge and jury as he was escorted from the court. (The New Vision (Uganda), 3/2/01. Spotter: Dr Peter Fellows)

● "We very much regret that the show's producers did not take enough care with what went on," a spokesman for the Asahi Television Network told viewers of the station's main evening news programme. "We clearly need to rethink the way we look after performers on our torture TV programmes, and to teach staff to take more care with safety issues. And we will sincerely approach any discussions of compensation."

The spokesman was apologising after a young aspiring comedian, Takahito Nishina, lost several fingers while performing a stunt

on the +Night in Night Quiz Shinsuke-kun+ torture TV show, which is broadcast throughout the Kansai region. "Asking him to carry a large frozen fish for five kilometres in fingerless gloves in one of the coldest parts of the country was clearly too much. He complained after a few minutes that he could no longer feel his fingers, but because he wanted to win the prize, he continued to carry the fish. By the time he had finished and doctors could examine his hands, frostbite had set in. Sadly, Mr Nishina has lost parts of all the fingers on his left-hand and will need skin grafts on his right-hand fingertips and his left nostril. However, ATN will pay all his medical bills, and he still has the fortnight's holiday for two in Los Angeles, which he won outright and can take when he has fully recovered." (Mainichi Daily News, 7/3/01. Spotter: Ian Morris)

● "Do not all young men dream of being bulletproof?" a Lambu villager asked reporters from the Ghana News Agency. "So are we really any different? When the sorcerer came to our village and promised that, for a fee, he could make us invulnerable to bullets, swords, arrows and foreign air bombs, about fifteen of us agreed to try. After we had paid him, he gave us a magic



concoction of herbs, and told us to smear our bodies with it every day for two weeks. Then he would return.

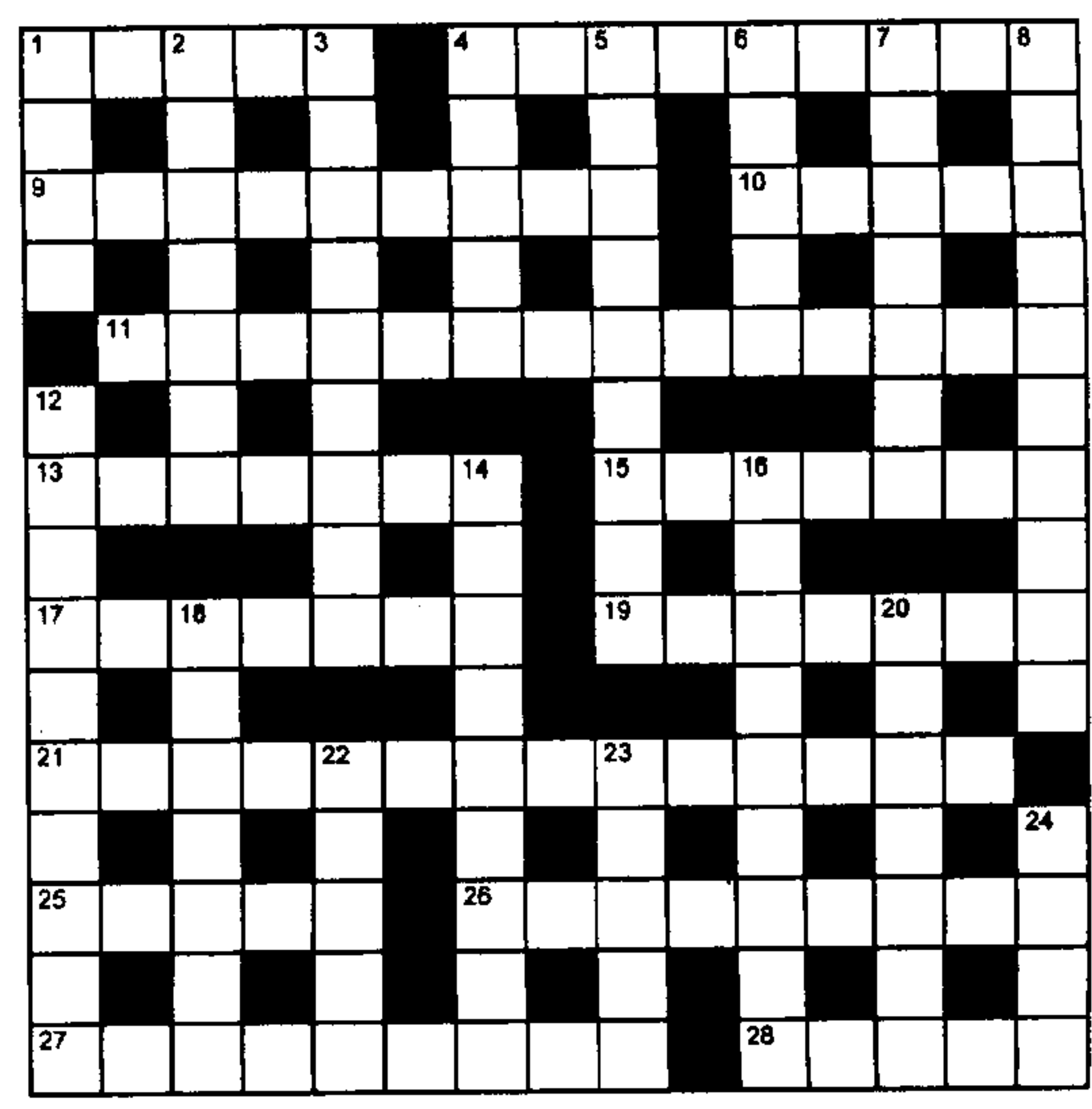
"We did as he said, but after a week I tried poking myself with a stick and I started to bleed, so I lost confidence in the sorcerer. But not my friend, Aleobiga Aberima. He was convinced it would work, and smeared the paste onto his body three or four times a day. When the sorcerer returned, Aleobiga volunteered to be shot, to check if the magic spell had worked. So one of the other villagers fetched a rifle and shot him. He died instantly from a single bullet.

"We were so angry that we turned the rifle on the sorcerer and shot him too, several times. But he managed to escape unharmed, so the ointment obviously does work after all. But not on Aleobiga, of course. Perhaps he washed too much after he had applied the ointment." (Reuters (Accra), 15/3/2001. Spotter: David Tong)

EYE CROSSWORD 181

by Cyclops

£100 prize



ACROSS

- 1 On taking exercise, Hattersley's still in bad shape (5)
- 4 One blow and the male jerk's without feeling (9)
- 9 Weird practices when comic screwed with slut (9)
- 10 Punch's chief, besieged by The Eye, is a pariah (5)
- 11 Mad, even though getting an NHS bed finally? (3,4,7)
- 13 Holder's got an erection and accumulates points (5,2)
- 15 Failure Gore really tried to be President (4-3)
- 17 Dick swallows Ecstasy with old Herb (7)
- 19 Contracted mega-bore, pisspoor Boycott (7)
- 21 Have a satisfying poke, with consideration for what Blair desperately wants to see among the electorate (4-4,6)
- 25 Terrible conflict seen as publicity-grabbing "positive response" (5)
- 26 Decide not to go all the way when 'phone sex gets sour? (4,2,3)
- 27 Latest type of cattle in such a state (3,6)
- 28 Lamb product - extremely suspect top cuts, for instance (5)

DOWN

- 1 Measure an audience might take as indecent (4)
- 2 The main president? Bill if one gets around (7)
- 3 Shout "that hurt!" and point to each part of 2 (6,3)
- 4 'Topless bitchiness' is Carol's reported character (5)
- 5 Putting one over poor dear Mrs T, in which Aitken denied any knowing involvement (4,5)
- 6 How do you do cringe-making, vacuous, celeb interviews? (5)
- 7 Piss artist, one who makes waiters happy when taking a length ... (7)
- 8 ... not pulling out when having illicit sex (8,2)
- 12 Star turn Lenny and Rolf with rat-arsed opening (5,5)
- 14 Whore and stud sandwiching Chief Inspector's trunk (9)
- 16 How to get more lowly than a writer: become an Eye regular! (9)
- 18 Marvellous organ comes to peak - it's archly raised (7)
- 20 Making love, suitor's screamingly funny (7)
- 22 Take a look, poke between the buttocks (removing ring) and point (2,3)
- 23 Female clone, topless, hardly produces a serious erection (5)
- 24 Flash Jack's gone doubtful (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 27.4.01. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 180

Winner: W. F. MAIN

ACROSS: 1 Pain in the arse 9 Evincing 10 Dialect 13 Pelvis 15 Odysseus 18 Unknowns 19 Eraser 22 Realm 24 Out with it 26 Beatnik 27 Nairobi 28 Bush telegraph.

DOWN: 1 Press-up 2 Ibiza 3 Incognito 4 To date 5 Eldorado 6 Roast 7 Erectness 8 Athens 14/12/11 Like a lamb to the slaughter 16 Surviving 17 In pocket 18 Unrobe 20 Rattish 21 Atonal 23 Minos 25 Hoo-ha.

BY APPOINTMENT

PRACTICAL ROAD SIGNS: A GUIDE

CONCEALED ENTRANCE

WILDLIFE CROSSING

LAY-BY

HUMPS IN ROAD

PAVEMENT ENDS

FARM TRAFFIC AHEAD

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!



I hope you all had a wonderful Easter, getting out into the country and spending lots of money in gift shops, rural craft museums and similar attractions.

What a wonderful reminder it was of how many glorious opportunities there are to spend your money in all our unique British countryside facilities.

And how ridiculous it is to imagine that there is nothing to see in the country except a lot of animals on fire. (Surely "on farms"? A.C.)

Why on earth, one can't help wondering, do people spend a fortune flying off for their holidays to places like Tuscany and the Seychelles when they could stay at home to visit such exciting tourist centres as the St Albion's Miniature Railway (temporarily closed due to the Easter Holiday track maintenance programme), the historic Martello Tower (closed due to cliff erosion) or our local Moth Sanctuary (closed due to Foot and Mouth).

So many of you were obviously out-and-about enjoying the pleasures of supporting the rural economy, that you did not make it to our special Multi-Denominational Easter, Pasok and Spring Solstice Celebration Service last Sunday morning.

So, for the benefit of any parishioners who could not be there, may I just talk you through the sermon I gave about what I called "The Real Message of Easter". What I said was this: Look, no one's pretending that sometimes things look a bit black.

That's what we were thinking about on Good Friday. How there are times when the whole world seems full of doom and gloom, and people don't know where to turn!

But only three days later, it's a very different picture, isn't it? At least I think it is!

The sun is shining, the daffodils are out, everyone is eating Easter eggs and the little



lambs are gambolling in every meadow! Well, perhaps not this year, but the underlying message remains the same!

What Easter is really telling us is that everything is under control! It's all going to turn out fine!

As it says in the Good Book, "Every cloud has a silver lining" (*Book of Proverbs, 7.14*).

So, that's what I want to leave you with this Eastertide. The important thing is to put your trust in the Vicar, and realise that, in the end, to paraphrase the words of that great mystic St Julian of Lloyd-Webber, "All will be well that ends well."

Yours in chrisis,

Tony

PARISH TALKING POINT

A lot of parishioners are asking me these days, "Vicar, why do we still have to go on having prayers for the Royal Family? It is the year 2001, you know!"

Well, I'd like to make it clear that I personally am 100 percent behind the Queen (whatever we may think about what some of the others get up to!). But in a modern parish like ours, it is very important to keep in close touch with what ordinary people are thinking! So that is why I have asked Mr Smith (and, of course, his partner!) to organise a special "Internet Poll" to find out exactly what all of you think about this very important matter. The questions he is asking are:

A: Does it really make sense in the year 2001 to go on praying for the members of an outmoded institution based on the hereditary principle?

Or

B: Shouldn't we be praying instead for people who are more relevant to modern Britain, eg unemployed alcoholics (such as Cherie's father, Mr Booze). T.B.

Pride of the Parish

Cherie and I were privileged to be invited as guests-of-honour to the very moving ceremony in the parish hall to salute "Achievers of the Parish 2001", hosted by Mrs Vorderman (who presents the very popular radio show in our local hospital "Keep Smiling, You're Not Dead Yet!"). The theme of the evening was "Unsung Heroes", and I was moved to tears by the sense of humility I felt as I listened to so many tales of people's courage in adversity. And, you know, what made us feel most humble of all was to think that all these brave folk, young and old, black and white, gay and straight, were all members of the parish of which I am privileged to be the Vicar! Unfortunately, there is not room here to list all of those wonderful people (or indeed any of them!), but I assure them they remain very much in my thoughts! So, well done, all of you, whatever you did!

A Statement From Mr Campbell, The Editor Of This Newsletter

Dear Readers,

I wanted you all to be first to know that, as from next month (or after the PCC elections, whichever is sooner!), I shall no longer be editing this newsletter. Four years is a long time to serve in any job, and I have decided it is time for a change! So, I have decided to step down. I am sure this will come as a shock to many of you, particularly the Vicar, who may find it difficult to come up with a replacement. But, let me reassure Tony and everyone else that I will not be going far!

Although my job description may have changed, I will still be sitting in the same office and doing the same basic job, ie telling the Vicar what to do! So, it's goodbye from me, and it's hullo from me! A.C.



MILLENNIUM TENT UPDATE

Mr Falconer writes:

Would parishioners please refrain from using the millenium tent as a skip. Today I noticed that someone has thrown an old ironing board and a microwave oven on top of it. We are still trying to find a buyer for the Tent and this does not help. So DON'T do it! C.F.

Notices

■ What a pity about the leaving party for Mrs Jay, the retiring Matron of the St Albion's Old Folks Home. Although hundreds of invitations were sent out, on the day sadly no one turned up. This was obviously a pity, since we did not have an opportunity to thank Margaret for the unique contribution she made in bossing the old people around and throwing them out of their rooms. T.B.

Tip Of The Week

Many thanks to PCC member Mr Gus Macdonald, who has sent in some very useful advice for would-be travellers: "A lot of people these days are finding it very expensive to travel by train. But there is one simple way

to beat constantly rising rail fares. Go by plane instead, as I always do!

Thank you, Gus, for such a handy tip. A £5 TV licence voucher is winging its way to you! A.C.

TORIES UNITE



SOAP UPDATE

Eastenders

WHO FIRED Janet? The big mystery continues about the demise of foul-mouthed regular, Janet. Was it Simon, the fat bloke with the beer belly, who gave her the job in the first place? Or was it Irish Tony, the Mr Big of the Street? No one cares.

Eye Rating: z-z-z-z-z

Coronation Street

SOPHIE is in trouble with Brenda for bad-mouthing the family in public. And what about her husband Edward? Is he gay, as rumour has it? And will they both be out of a job? Who cares?

Eye Rating: z-z-z-z-z

The Archers

JEFFREY is trying to get his trial delayed on the grounds that he might be found guilty. But Mary is still standing by him. But for how long? Who cares?

Eye Rating: z-z-z-z-z

The New Sixth Form Examination

- How It Will Look

Maths Paper One

1. If an AS Level is worth half of an old A Level, and an old A Level is worth one AS Level plus one A2 Level or twice the value of an old O Level or 2½ times an old GCSE, then how many AS Levels will it take to secure a place reading Anne Robinson Studies at the University of Neasden (formerly North Circular Polytechnic)?

Time allowed for answer: 2 years.

WHAT YOU WON'T READ IN THE SUN THIS WEEK

Mad Chinks Capitulate To Yanks! 1

Hats Off To Hero Bush! 2

Yellow Commie Chinese In Backdown Shock 3

Pathetic Murdoch Kowtows To Peking In Desperate Bid To Sell Plisspoor Satellite Channel 94



Should These Easter Symbols Be Banned From Northern Ireland Politics?

by Our Ulster Correspondent
Lily Savage

ONCE again, a furious row has erupted in Belfast over the use of traditional symbols at Easter.

Unionist members of the Assembly are claiming that letting off bombs at this time of year is a blatantly Republican gesture. "We all know what the Easter Bomb stands for," said a spokesman.

However, Republicans were quick to deny the significance of the bomb. "A bomb at a post office at Easter means nothing in particular," claimed one moderate who (continued for ever)

MUSSOLINI BIDS FOR RAIL FRANCHISE

by Our Rail Staff Phil Carriage

THE late Italian dictator, Mr Benito Mussolini, yesterday indicated that he would be bidding for the franchises on a number of UK routes.

Speaking from his grave in Italy, the former fascist leader said that he had a very good record of

making the trains run on time and was confident he could do the same with the likes of Thames North-West, Virgin Link East and Connex South Central.

He added that although he was dead he could still do a lot better than the current franchise holders.

GLENDASLAGG

The Countess of Wheresex (Geddit???)

BRIDGET JONES – aren'tchasick-offer? With her dreary diary and her moronic movie!?!? What's all the fuss about, mister?!?! Just 'cause she's got a fat B-U-M and drinks too much, anyone would think she was interesting!?! Buzz off, Bridget. Take your diary wiv yer!?!?

HATS OFF to Bridget Jones!?! Who says we Brits are finished when this magic movie has got the whole world queuein' up for tickets to see Bridget's Beautiful Bum!?! Forget your troubles and lose yourself in this fab feel-good Flirty Film of the Century!?!? It's better than a bucketful of Chardonnay!?! Cheerzzz!!!

MISS WORLD – Why can't they leave it alone, for cryin' out loud!?!? What's wrong with a gaggle of gorgeous gals showin' off what God's given 'em on the telly!?!? Back off, Mr Killjoy, and let's all have a gawp and a giggle?!?!?

MISS WORLD – What a disgrace!?! How can this degrading spectacle be allowed to continue in the year 2001?!?!? What kind of perverts want to look at this tacky excuse for men to go a-

leerin' and a-sneerin' at the flower of the world's womanhood?!?! Clear off, Mrs Filth (ie, Mrs Morley) p-l-e-a-s-e!?!?!?

THREE CHEERS for Joan Collins!?!? This eighty-year sex bomb has proved that she's still got what it takes!?! She's dumped her tousled toyboy because he's not up to the job!?! Geddit?!?! Good on yer, Joannie!?!?

JOAN COLLINS!?!? She must be off her zimmer!?!? Fancy giving the heave-ho to a handsome hunk half her age!?! Take Glenda's advice, Granny!?! At our age you should be grateful for anything!!! Geddit?!?! (I can't remember the last time!?!? Geddit?!?!?)

HERE THEY are – Glenda's April Shower!?!?

BISHOP HOLLOWAY. OK, he's keen on Peter Tatchell? So, no one's perfect!?!?

SIR ALEX FERGUSON. You're on top 3 times in a row – once would be enough for this gal?! Geddit?!?!?

BORIS BECKER. 5 seconds of rumpy-pumpy in a cupboard!! That's what I call a service!?!?!?

Byeeee!!

SPOTLIGHT



Middle-aged bearded Asian actor seeks smug cameo roles in British films. Can appear as Salman Rushdie, Salman Rushdie or possibly Alan Yentob. As seen in *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001).

"What on earth is he doing standing next to Lord Archer in this film?" Daily Telegraph.

Contact: C/o Bollywood Casting, Neasden.

FOOT AND MOUTH

CRISIS OVER

- It's official

by Our Political Staff Phil Trench

The Ministry of Agriculture has decided that it does not need to publish any more figures on the foot and mouth epidemic, because, said a spokesman, "We now have the disease completely under control."

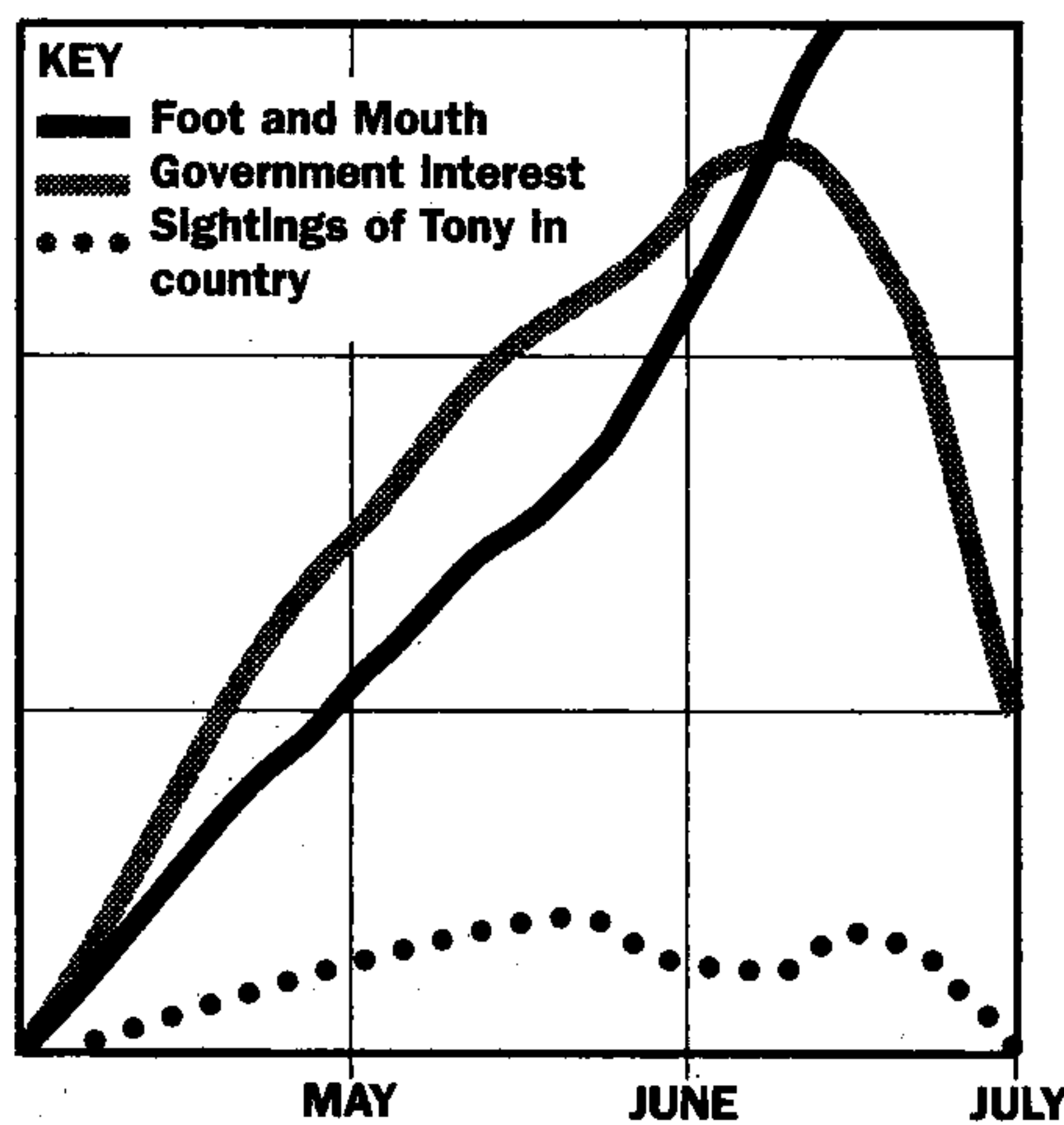
"It is not in the public interest," the spokesman continued, "to cause unnecessary alarm to the public by constantly putting out statistics about millions of animals having to be killed."

"The only thing the public needs to know," he said, "is that we have finally cracked this one, and from now on everything is going to be absolutely alright."

On other pages

- Thousand of farmers demonstrate against "total failure" of mass-slaughter policy **2**
- MAFF vets admit "We haven't a clue what's going on" **3**
- MAFF claims foot and mouth "All the fault of farmers" **4**
- Brigadier attacks farmers **5** ● Farmers attack Brigadier **6**
- Brigadier denies attacking farmers **7**
- MAFF blames Chinese restaurants **8**
- President Bush apologises to Chinese restaurant community **9**
- MAFF attacks goat **10**
- Millions of angry goats attack MAFF **11**
- Army called in to resist goat horror **12**
- Chris Evans to marry someone or other **94**

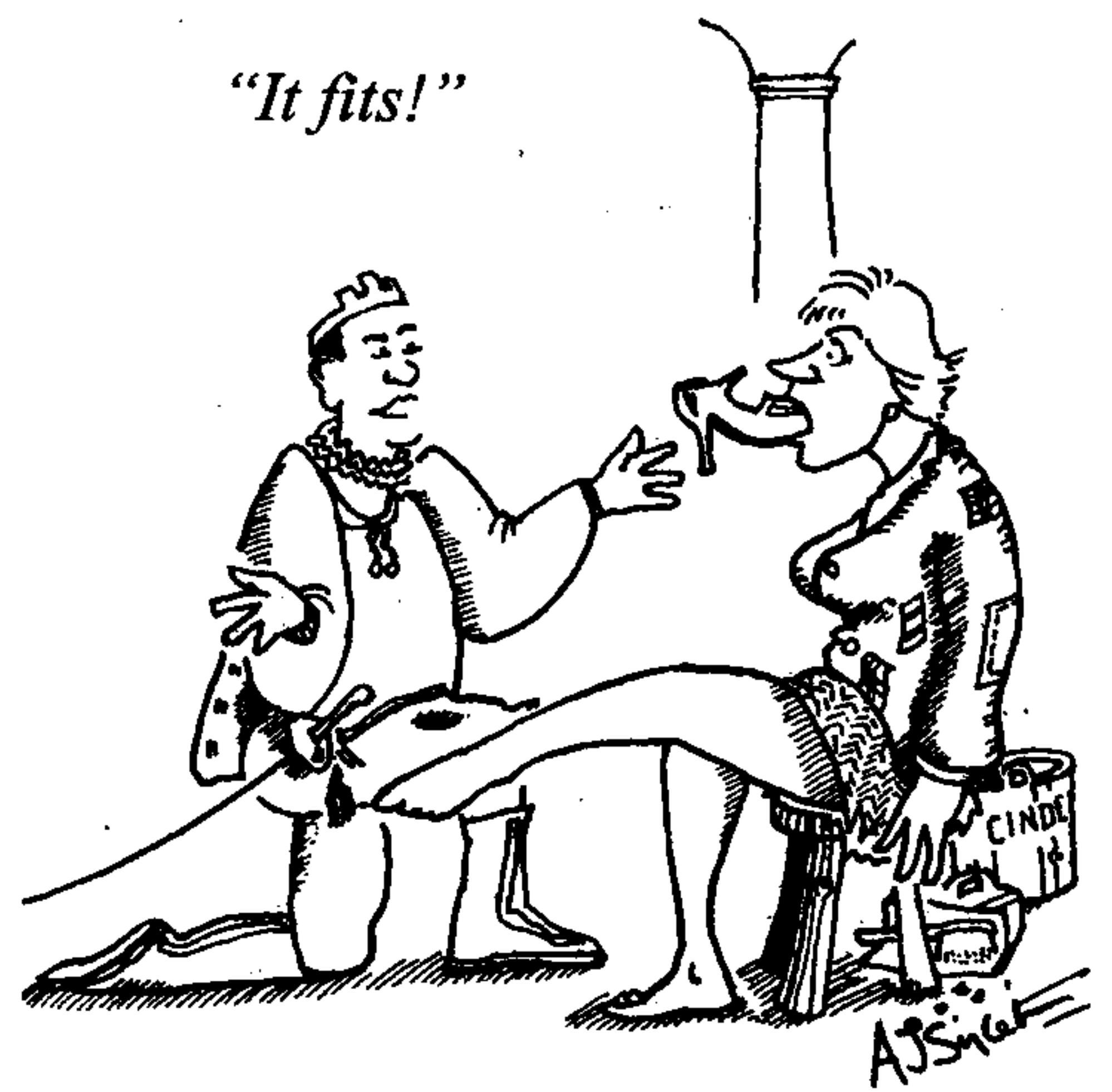
GRAPH IN FULL



The government has assured the public that its interest in the Foot and Mouth outbreak has already peaked. It says the number of reported sightings of Tony Blair in the countryside is well down on last week and it predicts that by 7 June the interest should have dwindled away to almost nothing.

Late News

Vaccination Policy was "right all along" — Blair defends record.



ME AND MY BEARD

THIS WEEK



ROLF HARRIS

Have you always had a beard?

Definitely. Ever since I was old enough to grow one I have had one.

What do you think it says about you?

Well, a lot of famous artists and musicians have had beards, Rembrandt, Van Gogh and so on. Perhaps it's just a tradition.

Do you groom your own beard?

No, I leave it to the girls at TV Centre! They're the experts.

Do you think you would be so successful without a beard?

I've often thought about that. In my business it's very difficult to tell how the public will respond.

Have you found a beard useful when making your animal programmes?

Good question? I sometimes think some of the funny little creatures look up at me and think I'm one of them! But I could be imagining that.

Have you ever encountered any prejudice on account of your beard?

Occasionally you might get kids shouting "Hullo, Beardie" at you. But that's all part of the fun. I don't take any notice.

Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with your beard?

No.

NEXT WEEK: The Chief Rabbi.



HUSBAND



BLAIR SALUTES OUR HEROES AT THE SHAME OF BRITAIN AWARDS



by the Entire Mirror Staff Phil Everypage

A GLITTERING array of top celebrities today gathered in the glittering Maxwell Suite of the Hinduja Ramada, Neasden, to pay a deeply moving tribute to the unsung heroes who make Britain what it is today.

Hundreds of scantily-clad soap stars, footballers and Carole Vorderman wept openly as the most courageous and inspiring men and women of our time stepped up to receive the ultimate accolade – a 'Mirror Shame of Britain 2001' trophy in the shape of the world-famous Millennium Dome.

Wheelchair Granny Runs Marathon For Charity

The first winner to be congratulated by Prime Minister Tony Blair and his ravishing wife Cherie Booth QC was plucky little Colin Myler who, against all legal advice, bravely insisted on ruining an £8 million trial in a bid to save his circulation from drowning.

Colin was praised for his deeply moving contempt for the judicial process, and his touching modesty in attempting to give the credit for his achievement to his deputy-editor and other members of the night staff of his newspaper.

The prime minister Tony Blair

saluted Colin for his 'outstanding arrogance and stupidity'.

"This is the sort of Britain we can all be proud of," he said, "in which everybody can do good for others by voting Labour."

Toddler's Pitbull Saved By One-legged Fireman

The next award caused even the most hardened celebrities present to sob uncontrollably into their champagne glasses.

The boyish figure of little Piers Moron stepped up to the podium to be hugged by Cherie Blair, who gave him his coveted 'Mirror Shame' trophy.

Limbless Dinner Lady In Bungee Jump To Save Hedgehog Sanctuary

"Piers," she said, "has been battling for over a year against the appalling threat of being fired. Piers is DTI-positive, and every day he has to live with the possibility that he could go down for what his doctors have diagnosed as a potentially fatal case of insider dealing."

"Yet, in spite of everything, Piers remains smiling, happy (cont'd. 2002)"



BOOK OF THE YEAR

"The Hondootedly Connundrum"

by former BBC Political Editor John Cole

IN his sensational debut novel, author John Cole tells the gripping tale of a distinguished and universally-respected Belfast-born journalist and broadcaster who bravely refuses to change his accent despite the fact that no one can understand him.

Now read on...

Hondetoit mariellafrostrup jansibelius a light rain was falling over Belfast svengoraneriksson pgtips leonardodicaprio turned out nice again captaincorelli's mandolin returnofthejedi there was silence in

the room monteverdi's coronation ofpoppea chatanoogaogachoochoo ericcantona do the RUC know? Starbuckscaffelattetogotortellini pomodoro Mary shrugged her shoulders mikedimefrancismaude pokemonthemovie the revolver spat flame minorpublicschoolboys sneeringatbrilliantjournalist formerlyontheobserver the body slumped to the floor pierodella francesca papilio vanessaatlanta cinammongoldengrahams crisis at Stormont as pigeons come home to roost salmanrushdie viscountmas sereneofferrard solomongrundy bornonmonday will this do? To be continued...

THE SHOWDOWN OF THE MILLENNIUM!

Who are they — the contenders for the hottest seat in British journalism today?

Who will be the editor of the Spectacularlyboring? Six to watch

MICHAEL BORE, 26, high-flying *Times* columnist who wrote a definitive life of Michael Portillo, *Whither Portillo?*. Known to be a right-of-centre Eurosceptic who believes "Britain should be in Europe but not part of it".

STEPHEN BORER, 59, high-flying founder of the *Indescribablyboring*, who once edited a definitive anthology about the press, *Whither Journalism?*. Known to be a centre-of-right Eurosceptic, Gover believes "Britain should be out of Europe, but not yet".

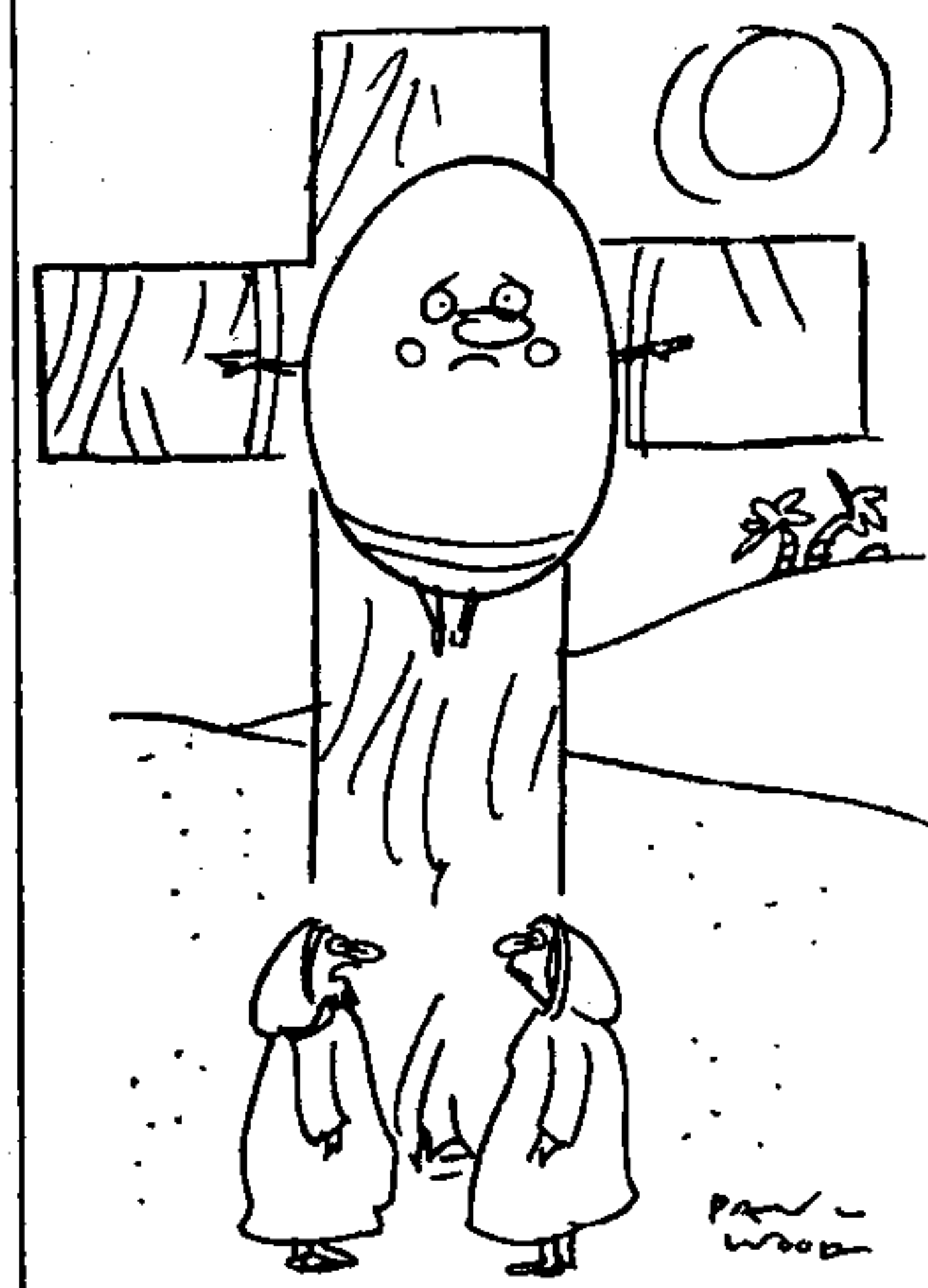
ALICE BORESON, 25, high-flying restaurant critic of the *Spectacularlyboring*, who is researching a definitive life of her husband, Tory high-flyer Edward Heathcoat-Amory, *Whither my Husband?*. A centre-of-centre Eurostar, she wants to be "in Europe, but only at weekends".

MATTHEW D'ANBORA, 21, high-flying deputy editor of the *Sunday Torygraph*, who wrote the definitive editorial on the appointment of Alan Milburn as Health Secretary, entitled *Whither the NHS?*. A left-of-right Europhobe, who believes "Britain must be at the heart of

Europe while remaining opposed to everything it stands for".

BORIS BORSON, 31, high-flying current Editor of the *Spectacularlyboring*, who is researching his new book, *How I Lost Henley*. An all-over-the-place Eurosceptic Europhile who believes that he should be in Parliament but (cont'd. p94)

The meaning of Easter



MURRAY HARKIN SOPHIE WESSEX EDWARD WINDSOR

Aloof. Unavailable. Royalty

Aloof. Unavailable. Royalty

Aloof. Unavailable. Royalty

(quite fancy a bit of PR work though)



SOPHIE RHYS-JONES'S DIARY¹⁵

For anyone who's ever been set up by a tabloid

A No-Longer-Working Titled Production

HEALTH WARNING: Adopting this lifestyle could seriously damage your wealth

IN ALL NEWSPAPERS NATIONWIDE

HILARIOUSLY funny story of silly sloaney PR girl who is desperate to find Mr Rich. When she falls for tall Arab stranger ("Mr Darkie"!!) she thinks her problems are over. But it turns out to be a complete disaster!

As she writes in her diary:

"Bugger! Bugger! Bugger! Arab Prince Charming turns out to be ghastly bloke from

**Eye
Verdict**

News of World with towel on head. Have gained 200 column inches (v.v. bad) and lost 500,000 pounds (Aaargh!!) Am now lady of leisure ie ghastly jobless oik in manner of Fergie or similar. Fags: one (Murray, not Edward, as I told News of World).

You'll rock with laughter at the crazy antics of Sophie as she makes a fool of herself in front of her mother-in-law (That's enough Jones. Ed.)

News of World with towel on head. Have gained 200 column inches (v.v. bad) and lost 500,000 pounds (Aaargh!!) Am now lady of leisure ie ghastly jobless oik in manner of Fergie or similar. Fags: one (Murray, not Edward, as I told News of World).



"Good grief! Even we have an image to think of!"

LATE NEWS

INTERNET TWINS RETURNED

TABLOID editors have judged that in light of a court ruling the internet twins must be returned to their front pages.

"It's terrible to think that for months these two little children have been deprived of even the most basic coverage," said one delighted editor, "but with the Kilshaws back in Court we can now give these stories about them the home they so clearly deserve."

CORNER POETRY

Sir Harry Secombe

So. Farewell then
Sir Harry Secombe
Goon extraordinaire.

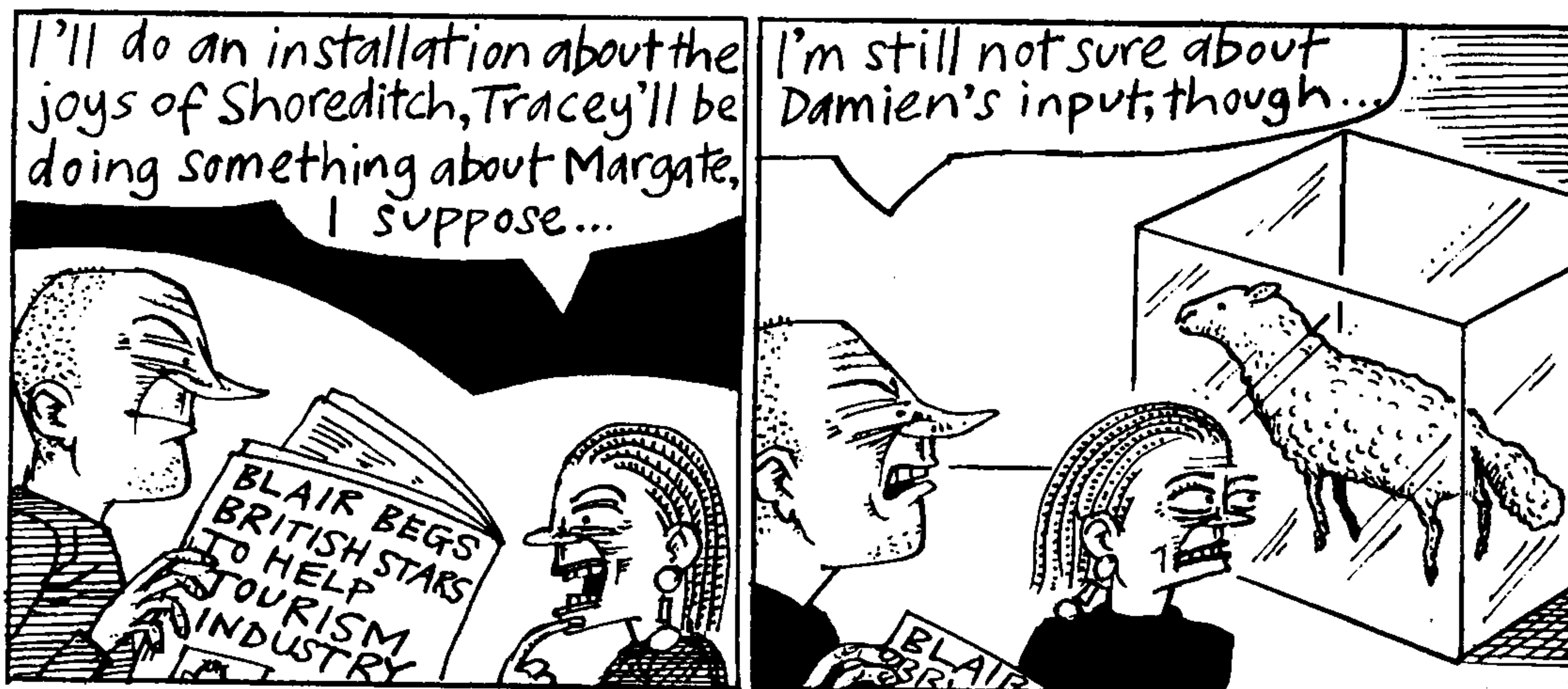
Keith's Mum says
She could not understand
What was so
Funny
About it.

But she did like you
Singing hymns on
Songs of praise.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



CLASSIC STING REVEALS WOMAN TRYING TO USE HER TITLE TO MAKE MONEY

by Our Humbug Staff Max Piffle

WHEN the polite-sounding Arab came into her office and started talking business there was no way that she could have known that she was being set up. Yet that is exactly what happened.

Poor Rebekkah Wade believed Mazzer Mahmood's claim that he was "a real journalist" with "an important story to tell" and when he described the details of his great scoop and boasted about its contents, Rebekkah was completely fooled.

In retrospect, it is clear that she was far too keen to accept the nonsense that Mazzer was talking and was planning to use her title, The News of the World, to make a large fortune.

THE EYE SAYS

WAS THIS greed? Or just naivety? Should Rebekkah be punished for her misjudgement or should we blame the head of 'The Firm', King Rupert himself, for not laying down guidelines about the sort of behaviour that is acceptable in a minor editor? Either way, it is now clear that the Countess of Sex, as Rebekkah is known formally, must resign her post and rely on her partner's TV career to keep her in the style to which she has become accustomed.

On other pages • 'Is this the end for pieces about the end of the Monarchy?' asks Phil Space p. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 94

Continuing our landmark series

JEWES OF THE WORLD

(Exclusive to the Daily Telavivgraph)

Part 94

JEWES in Britain today occupy many senior and powerful positions in all walks of life. But perhaps the most powerful of all is the wife of our own proprietor, who can

use her influence to fill large parts of the newspaper with pieces about how Israel is always right, and how anyone who says otherwise must be a raving anti-Semite who should be fired. (You're fired, B. Amiel. Ed.)

T.B. THREAT GROWS

by Our Medical Staff

WESTMINSTER sources have warned that a fresh outbreak of T.B. has the potential to spread, causing untold annoyance right across the country.

Tony Blairculosis is highly contagious, and is typically spread to the British people in exposed public places, such as town squares and shopping malls, by a

wide-eyed man who will be sweating profusely, demanding to shake their hand, and asking them for their support on polling day.

"By June 6th, when the outbreak of Tony Blairculosis is likely to peak, it's unlikely that any part of the country won't feel sick to the stomach after having a dose of it," said a senior government... (cont. p. 94)

AHERNE TO QUIT TELEVISION



The initiative, designed to cut £25 million from the £60 million annual Whitehall hotel bill within three years, will mean that top London hospitals such as Claridge's and the Dorchester will be out of reach.

The Times

Also reporting its interims on Thursday is Arcadia. The Top Shop-to-Dorothy Perkins retail group's interim figures should show a profit of about £20 compared with an £8.5m loss last time.

Daily Telegraph

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

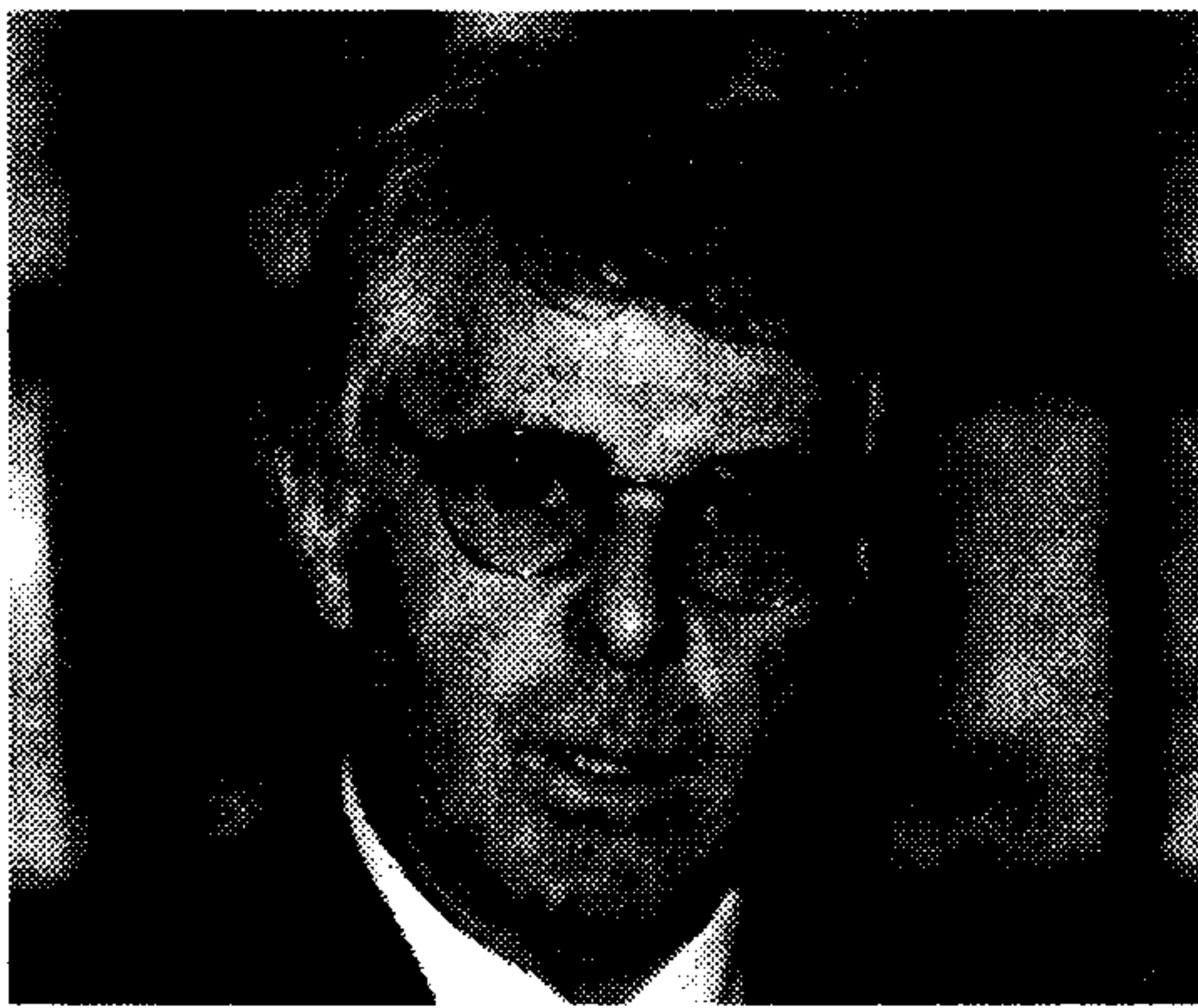


DIARY

Have you ever seen a tot in tears, a poorly tot of three or four years of age – in tears? Well, I have. It cuts me up, it really does. There's only one word for it. *Shattered*. And whenever I see a poorly tot with great big tears rolling down her tender little cheeks, I say to myself, "*Never will I allow a tot to suffer like this*". And with that, I lift the phone, call a top editor and provide him with an exclusive scoop concerning an MP's three-in-a-bed kinky love-romp for 120k up front. By destroying a reputation, I'm putting something back into society – doing my bit to make this world a better place. And when I see those tears dry, and a lovely, sunny smile lighting up the face of that very, very special little tot, well, it makes it all worthwhile, it really does. Have you ever seen a tot smile, a tot of three or four years of age really *smiling*? Have you? Believe me, it's one of the most beautiful sights in the world, it really is.

My good friends and clients Alan and Judith Kilshaw are very tot-minded too. And they love two tiny tots in particular very, very much. Is that a crime? Not in my book it's not. So I was delighted to help steer Alan and Judith and improve their public perception. "If you want to bring ordinary decent folk round to your point of view, Judith" I told her, "then you've got to dye your hair blonde, behave erratically, and scream obscenities in court." Well, it did the trick. I've already got the Kilshaws onto top-rating shows like Kilroy and Richard and Judy, and of course Oprah in the States – and we've got high hopes for a recording contract come the autumn, and publishers are showing a lot of interest in The Official Kilshaw Babycare Manual. Believe me, Alan and Judith are going to be mega, and we're talking both sides of the Atlantic. I could do for them what I did for Mandy Allwood. Remember her? IVF lady. Eight lovely tots on the way. Exclusive rights worldwide. Sadly, the tots all passed away. Broke my heart. So now when I'm advising Alan and Judith Kilshaw, I'm not doing it for Max Clifford. No, I'm doing it for the Allwood tots, bless their little hearts. Well, you've got to put something back, haven't you?

Don't get me wrong. I've got the greatest respect for The Beatles. Lovely guys, nice tunes, flogged a few copies, even if it's not quite so many as they claim. Fair enough. I'm



MAX CLIFFORD

not knocking them. But let's not kid ourselves. I was their publicist when they meant zilch. And believe me it was an uphill struggle to put them on the map. But with my talent and their push, we just about succeeded. I've been called the Fifth Beatle, but that's not a phrase in my vocabulary. I was more like the Second or Third Beatle. Elvis, too. When I first made his acquaintance, Elvis looked terrible, sang rotten. But with my help he conquered the world. Rudolf Nureyev, Francis Bacon, Frank Sinatra, Pablo Picasso, Winston Churchill – ever heard of them? These people didn't just appear out of nowhere, you know. They came to me and said, Max, they said, we've got the talent, you've got the contacts. Nelson Mandela, he was another. When he first came to me, he was a total unknown. I said to him, look, Nelson, do yourself a favour, check into prison for a couple of decades, check out again, then put on a fancy shirt and keep smiling. Fast forward to the year 2001, Nelson's a major public figure with a worldwide reputation for integrity – and that's something we can build on.

It's not something I talk about to my friends outside the media, but I'm secretly a very, very religious bloke. I hate to see a tot in tears. There's an old lady down our road – I really wouldn't like to see anyone hurling abuse at her and making her life a misery. I pray a lot, and I'm not embarrassed to admit it. Well, you've got to put something back, haven't you? And sometimes when I'm talking to Jesus, I say, Look, mate, we've got to do something about the old image. I'm not knocking the Pope, he's done some great things for your image in his time, but he's stuck in the past. Beards are a

turn-off, and no one cares for the whole scars-and-loincloth look anymore. Ditch the cross, mate, get yourself a shave, a haircut and a decent suit, and we'll see what we can do for you. You've heard of Denise van Outen? Lovely lady, Denise. When she first came to me she was on the check-out at Sainsbury's. She said to me, Max, I want to be a star. And the rest is history. Well, I think Denise could be persuaded to be seen out and about with you, Jesus. You'd give her the gravitas, she'd give you the glamour. Cross-fertilisation, that's the name of the game.

Dear, oh, dear. Sophie's come a cropper. Still, I can't shed too many tears. To be honest, it's the hypocrisy that gets up my nose. If she insists on telling fibs for clients and mixing with all sorts of unsavoury types and talking to the press and acting all holier-than-thou, well, she's only got what was coming to her. It's the pomposity of these toffee-nosed types that sticks in my gullet. The way they act as though they're doing the public a service. And that's why it's my duty to expose them. No doubt about it – I'm doing the public a service.

Charlie Manson? Lovely guy, top talent, great future. He phoned me from the penitentiary last July, said this is the way I see it, Max, I like what you've done for the profiles of your A list clientele, O.J. Simpson, Tony Martin and the Stephen Lawrence suspects, now I want you to work the same magic on me. Okay, the guy might've murdered some people in the past. But you could say the same about Hitler. Look, I know the guy, I know what a decent, gentle human being he is, not pompous at all. Never voted Tory in his life. And Charlie would hate to see a tot in tears. I tell you, he'll be the new Anne Robinson – especially after my friends in the press get to hear what I have on her. Meanwhile, O.J.'s lined up for his own talk-show, Tony Martin, bless him, is set to be the public face of Bernard Matthews' Norfolk Turkey Roasts, and the Stephen Lawrence lads are set to be the biggest boyband since The Beatles. And if my hard work stops the tears from trickling down the cheeks of just one tot, or prevents just one old lady being roundly abused by a masked gunman, believe me, it'll've all been worthwhile. Cheers!

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER



Literary Review

Mart in love

The War Against Cliché

Martin Amis

(Jonathan Cape, £20)

THIS is a book about a love affair. Or maybe two love affairs. Quite a long time ago — maybe the broker was even his old Dad — somebody introduced the young Martin Amis to Literature. Literature — that hot, ageless chick — was, I don't know, combing out her back hair or examining her complexion for spots in front of the mirror, but never mind; Mart was hooked, Mart was a contender.

Then, a bit later, somebody — some don, some chum, maybe even old Kingsley again — invited him to a party to meet Literature's younger sister, Literary Criticism. Literary

Criticism was, as ever, besieged by swains and suitors, being sat down and given cups of tea by F.R. Leavis and Lionel Trilling; but, well, Mart was prepared to hang around. Mart partied. Mart made the scene. The rest you know.

The War Against Cliché is a, shall we say, not unexpected assemblage. Mart's been threatening to package up his old book reviews for years and now here they are: 500 pages of aimings and blamings, forelock-tuggings and exercises in moist-eyed approbation, going back to the date in 1971 when he persuaded *The Spectator* to let him review the *Guinness Book of Records*.

It's quite a collection. It's a suave and sophisticated passage through a whole pile of Anglo-American stuff from the 70s, 80s and 90s. It's *love*. Mart provides a terse, modest and concerned introduction that looks both the sisters in the face and dares them not to underestimate the small guy in the stack-heeled boots who's been dangling his tongue in their ear all these years.

Not to underestimate his *love*. Literary Criticism is assured that after all the relativists and the beetle-browed college professors who think that Yoruba bush poets are just as valid as Tolstoy are gone ("Democratization has made one inalienable gain: equality of the sentiments") Mart will still be there. Literature, lest she should feel overlooked, is acclaimed as "the great garden that is always there and is open to everyone twenty-four hours a day". Never mind who wanders around and despoils the flower-beds, "the garden never suffers. It is, of course, Eden; it is unfallen and needs care."

Yes indeedy. The image of a mute, verdant Eden, with Mart in its midst, sternly yet humorously

and knowingly doffing his cap to the thronged blooms, is a captivating one. Yup, Mart loved Literary Criticism all right, but she was really only the facilitator, you know, the best friend dragged along on the hot date. There was a deal. Literary Criticism, suitably coaxed, would let him pursue the serious business of tracking down her flighty sister, who, sometimes, you know, isn't as serious as she might be and doesn't appreciate the intensity with which she's being addressed.

True love never runs smoothly, natch, and there are early signs that the relationship isn't working out. You can see Mart's irritation when Literary Criticism takes him back to the early 70s rumpus room to meet Iris Murdoch, Angus Wilson, C.P. Snow

and the others. Hot babes they're not. So where is the real action? And here Literary Criticism proves to be the finest, most disinterested, friend a young British novelist in the late 1970s with a career to make could wish for. Faded English roses are out; in march the Stateside stunners, all fat cleavage and flashed gussets: Saul Bellow, John Updike, Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth. Mart *loves* them. All of them. Sincerely. Why he even tries to write like some of them, sets his books in their country, spends time on their doorsteps. It's all too much.

And Mart is a respectful suitor. He holds Saul's hand, carries John's golfing umbrellas reviews, puts up with Phil's sexual fixations and when it comes to Vlad is practically prepared to abase himself on the carpet. All with nary a backward glance at those chaste English girls and boys (although J.G. Ballard was always good for a quick knee-trembler after the lights were out) who wouldn't do it the way he wanted.

Oh well. *The War Against Cliché* is a puzzling book: going out of its way to seem *engage* (reviews of books about masculinity, Thatcher, chess, football and so on) yet at heart fundamentally detached. All very well loving Literature, you see, but what about what runs beneath it? Mart's drawback, in fact, is his sheer brilliance as a suitor. Like Charles Highway in his first novel *The Rachel Papers*, Literature is something he is really fucking good at, from the Oxford first to the job at the *TLS* and the precocious early novels. To put it bluntly, Mart's never been involved in anything that wasn't to do with books, and you sometimes — if only sometimes — get a tiny feeling that the world beyond this particular window only exists at second hand; that if Mart wanted to find

out about something — some human procedural, some emotion — he'd look in a book.

Dad once said — curious how regularly with Mart one ends up invoking that old spectre — that the novelist's only duty was to Literature. Wrong, actually: the novelist's only duty is to other people. I don't think Mart is especially interested in other people. I think Mart is interested in Words. And forgive me for saying this, but it's a mite claustrophobic in here. Eden's fine, and I love the florid blooms and the frolicking wildlife, but as Scripture itself reminds us, there was no place in it, eventually, for Adam and Eve.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ NEW publisher House of Stratus is already making a name for itself — by organising a book launch with no actual books.

Having acquired paperback rights for *Mail on Sunday* political editor Simon Walters' novel *Second Term* from Politico's, which published the hardback, Stratus decided to use Politico's Bookstore at Westminster to launch its new title.

On the afternoon before the launch, not a single copy had arrived. Only at the last minute did Stratus representatives pitch up apparently bearing boxes of the precious work.

Alas, the shop was unable to do the brisk trade expected at book launches. All the copies of Walters' epic turned out to be marked "UNCORRECTED PROOF", finished copies still not being ready.

■ IT appears the long-running saga of author Andrew Malcolm's spat with Oxford University Press (see *Eyes passim ad infinitum*) may finally have come to a full stop.

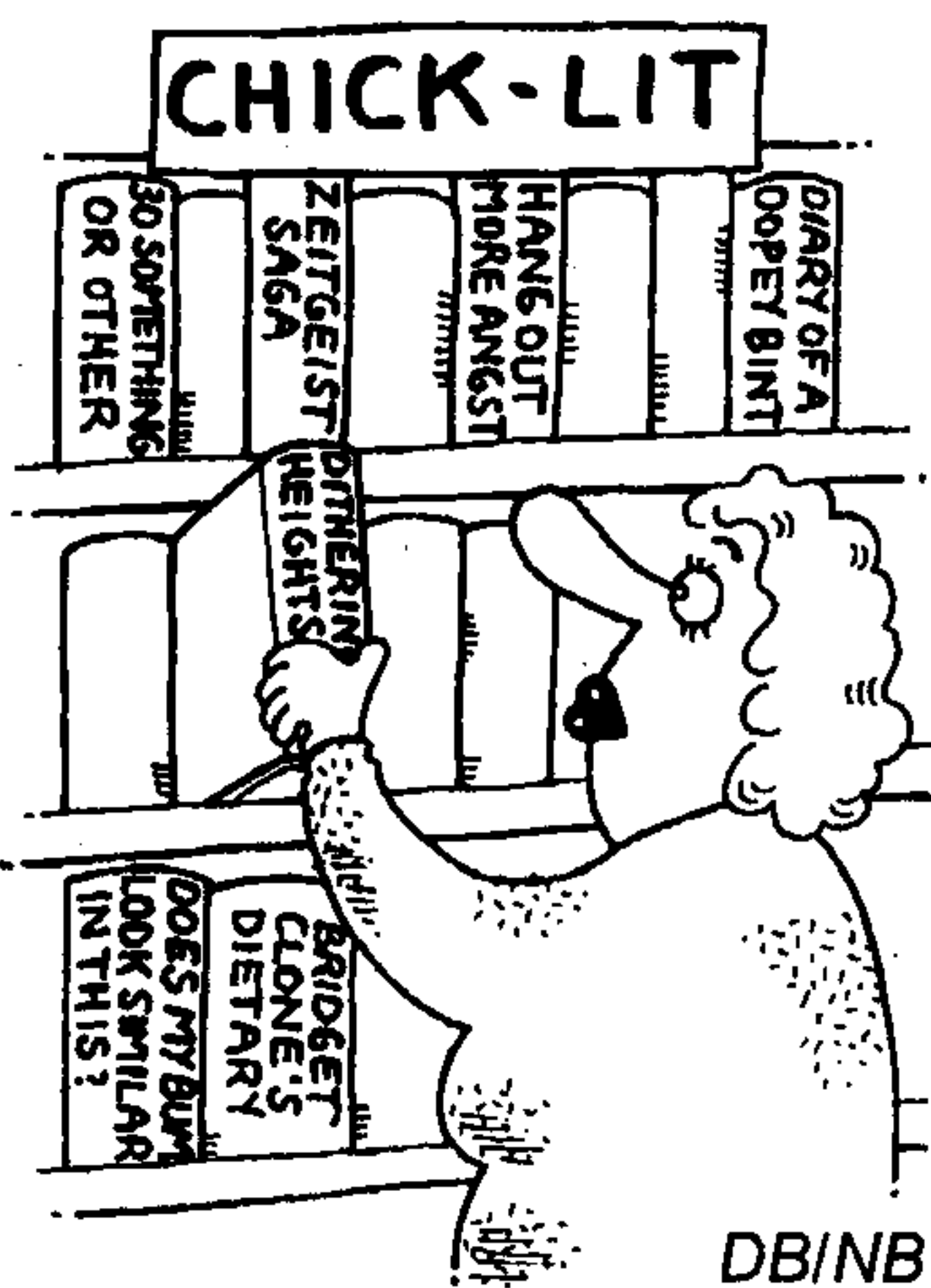
A recent *Times Higher Education Supplement* finally ran a review of Malcolm's *The Remedy*, the self-published account of his long legal battle with OUP. The reviewer, a former OUP editor called Henry Hardy, spoke warmly of Malcolm's "real gift for farce" and "considerable talents", as well as referring to Malcolm's "two excellent books: an engaging and original introduction to philosophy in dialogue form [*Making Names*] and this gripping story of the alleged ineptitude and skulduggery with which he was treated by a publisher to whom he offered it".

Hardy says the book's publication foundered, despite the enthusiasm of the editor who commissioned it, because of an "internal disagreement" with a senior OUP executive (though Hardy does not name that exec, it was Richard Charkin, now CEO of Macmillan) which saw the editor over-ruled.

■ EVIDENTLY some confusion at publisher Little, Brown, whose Warner division is shortly to reissue *Scotch on the Rocks*, a political thriller jointly written by Andrew Osmond and former foreign secretary Douglas Hurd.

Time was when Hurd and

NEW OLD SAYINGS



A Bridget too far

Osmond, as co-authors of four books, enjoyed equal billing on the front cover. Now, however, it is Lord Hurd of Westwell whose name is displayed in enormous gold capitals, dwarfing the throw-away line "and Andrew Osmond" underneath.

Obviously Osmond's downgrading has nothing to do with the fact that the former Gurkha and diplomat and one of the founders of *Private Eye* died in 1999. And when Hurd finds out he will no doubt tick the publisher off for the error.

'Bookworm'

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

PATRONS of Holland Park opera will be pleased to learn of a giant step forward in pursuit of quality: the London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea has booked the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to accompany this summer's operas.

Although the RPO is not in the best of health these days, it's an improvement on anything Holland Park has had before. It is, boasts the brochure, "the start of a new era for the company... one of the world's leading orchestras... establishing Holland Park as one of the capital's premiere opera companies", etc, etc.

Read the brochure more carefully, however, and you discover that what's being promised is not actually the "Royal Philharmonic Orchestra" but the "Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Holland Park". Ask the RPO what this means, and you'll get a coy response. What it actually means is that the orchestra is up to its old trick of selling itself twice over: throwing together a band of players who may or may not bear any relation to the RPO as known and loved, enhancing it with a misleading name, and leaving the real RPO to play dates elsewhere.

As the conductor Otto Klemperer used to say to his wife when confronted with the deceits of the recording studio: "Lottie... ein schwindel!"

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

IN THE BACK

CABIN FEVER AT BAe

AIR SAFETY experts have called for more than 200 BAe 146 jetliners — including three with the Queen's flight — to be grounded after the pilot and co-pilot of a flight from Paris to Birmingham nearly passed out after inhaling toxic fumes, the *Eye* can reveal.

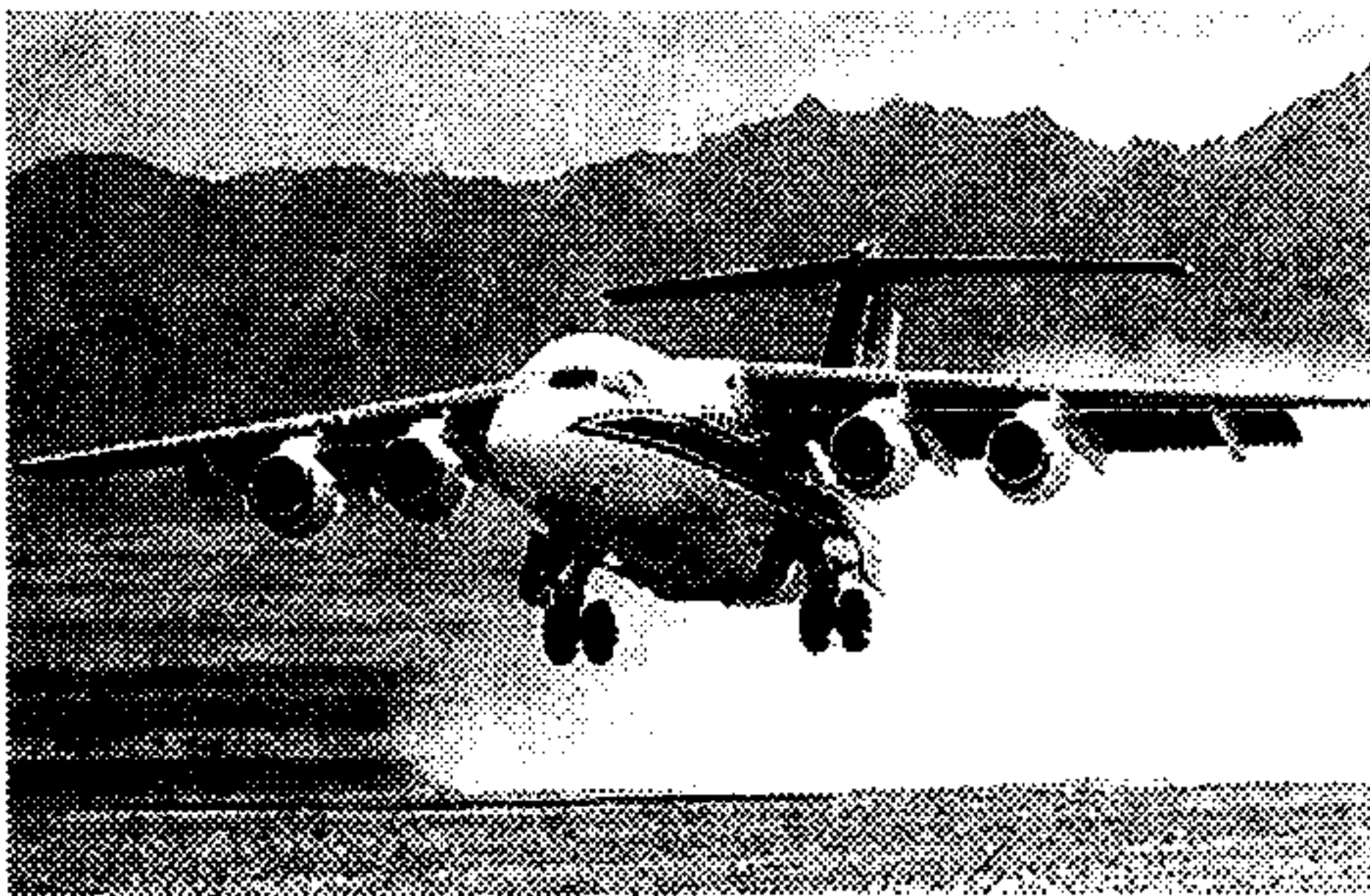
Private Eye warned of the dangers of fumes and organophosphates given off by engine oil being pumped into the cabin and cockpit of British Aerospace 146s many months ago. But only now have the civil aviation authority (CAA) and BAe Systems, as British Aerospace is now called, admitted that the fumes pose a danger to both passengers and crew.

On 26 March the CAA issued a mandatory airworthiness directive (AD) about the 146 fumes. It orders operators to report any fume incidents to the authorities and the manufacturer and to carry out a full and thorough investigation. Of 800-plus such incidents to date only one, in Australia, has produced an official (and damning) report, while two others — one in Sweden (see *Eye* 994) and one in Britain — are currently being investigated. This is despite numerous reports of "crew incapacitation" and long-term health effects on more than 100 air-crew.

The AD contains a vague reference to a previously unreported "recent crew incapacitation incident in the UK". The *Eye* can now exclusively reveal the details of that incident.

On 5 November last year a British European 146 was on a flight from Paris to Birmingham carrying five crew and 42 passengers. Shortly after take-off an oily smell was reported in the rear cabin, but this soon dissipated. Twenty minutes before landing, the captain left the flight deck to go to the lavatory. The co-pilot did likewise on the captain's return. Five minutes later the captain felt nauseous and had difficulty concentrating. Simultaneously, the co-pilot became unwell, with highly dilated pupils. He needed help putting on his oxygen mask, his hands were trembling, and he had difficulty communicating. The captain then noticed that his own depth of vision was impaired. The landing had to be made automatically, which the captain managed to achieve despite rising nausea. Both pilots were immediately taken to hospital.

The incident is now being urgently investigated



Fume, what a scorcher: the BAe 146

by the air accidents investigation branch (AAIB) at Farnborough. While the investigators, Peter Claiden and Eddie Trimble are among the most experienced and most respected in the world, their task is hardly enviable. The cause is easy enough to identify — a broken or damaged engine oil seal which allows organophosphates given off by engine oil to enter the cabin via the air conditioning system. This is clearly a design deficiency — but what to do about it is quite another matter. Previous modifications have already proved inadequate. Nor can an order be made to change the 932 engines in service with 207 BAe 146s around the world. Of these, some 115 planes are in service in the UK — three with the Queen's flight. Quite apart from the financial implications, replacement engines simply don't exist. Another suggested solution is that 146 crew — both flight and cabin — should wear gas masks. But that would hardly reassure passengers.

Such incidents are likely to increase as the aircraft age and get more leaky. Welcome though the AD is, it would not have prevented the Birmingham incident. Nor will it stop the same thing happening again.

Dr Chris Winder, head of safety sciences at Sydney University, has made a study of BAe 146 "cabin contamination". He is one of a growing band of engineers and scientists who believe that all 146s should be grounded. "We call it the flying gas chamber," he told the *Eye*. "I really can't understand why the authorities let it keep flying. It's an accident looking for a place to happen."

In Birmingham on 5 November it very nearly did.

these actions: consequently no provision has been made for settling the claims."

What is more, the company has set aside an "exceptional charge" of £7m in this year's accounts, bringing the total provision to £8.3m for the estimated costs of defending the actions in South Africa. Yet it appears the only difference between the two sets of claims is that the South African workers suffered worse exposure to asbestos than their UK counterparts.

Cape closed its UK operation in 1968 because of asbestosis. It continued to operate in South Africa until the 1980s. It took full advantage of the apartheid system to make use of children, pay slave wages and to provide respiratory masks for whites but not blacks.

It applied less stringent dust level standards in South Africa than it applied in the UK. According to Cape's 1999 annual report, the company finds jobs for its disabled UK workers, but no such provision was made for the South Africans.

It is difficult to see how Cape justifies paying off one set of claimants and not the other. After all, the £8.3m dedicated to fighting the South Africans would compensate hundreds if not thousands of the sick and dying claimants and their families there. How much longer can Norwich Union claim that this is "social" or "responsible"?

Protection racket

SIX years after Christopher Edwards, a young mentally ill man, was battered and beaten to death in Chelmsford prison (see *Eye* 1019), the police complaints authority (PCA) has finally announced that Essex police failed to protect him or investigate his death properly.

But the report, so long after Christopher's death at the hands of his cellmate, a known violent paranoid schizophrenic, means that most officers concerned escape any disciplinary action because they have since retired. Those still on the force are minor players who will receive a mere "ticking-off".

Eye readers will recall that Christopher should never have been in jail. He was a gifted student who was struck down by mental illness. In November 1994, when he had not taken his anti-psychotic drugs, he was arrested for causing a breach of the peace after approaching two women and asking them to take him home with them.

Despite his obviously bizarre behaviour, Christopher was remanded to jail, rather than to a psychiatric hospital. There he was placed in a cell with Richard Lindford and five hours later he was dead — so badly mutilated he could only be identified by his teeth.

Detailing a list of 15 errors by the police, the PCA said officers had failed to pass on concerns about both men's mental health to the prison service and that they had failed to call a police surgeon to examine Christopher after his arrest. They had also failed to record fully events about his stay in police custody and failed to call out "an appropriate adult" as obliged to when dealing with someone with mental incapacity.

The PCA found that while his death raised serious suspicions of negligence by the authorities, the investigation was "far too limited". Officers had, for example, failed to take evidence from several key witnesses. That meant the possibility of criminal negligence by prison officers contributing to the tragedy was never properly explored. Crucial questions about the placing of the two men together and unsupervised in a cell, about the silencing of cell alarms and about delay in getting help to Christopher were never properly looked into either.

The PCA's findings only go some way to meeting the concerns of the Edwards family — about half their complaints were rejected. What caused them much dismay was that they found that all but one of nearly 20 officers involved with Christopher's case declined to cooperate with the investigation. "Yet Essex police frequently request public assistance to help their investigations," they said.

Why would *they* not help when a young man was killed? The family are taking their case to the European court of human rights.

ASBESTOS APARTHEID

THOSE "socially responsible" investors in Cape plc like Norwich Union (*Eyes passim*) need only examine Cape's recent annual report to see the "socially responsible" double standards it applies to its former white British workers and its former black South African workers, all poisoned by asbestos.

On one page it details the "history of industrial disease claims" being lodged in the UK and says that "where the group has determined that it is appropriate to do so, settlement has been made". It also makes clear that it will have to "settle" an unknown number of cases likely to arise in the future from people who were exposed to asbestos and may yet go on to develop asbestos-related diseases.

Contrast this with the similar claims for damages from sick and dying workers in South Africa. Here it states: "The company has received legal advice that there are good prospects of defending



Cape of bad faith: African asbestos worker

ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU P: UKE

'NEW' LABOUR – such a fierce critic of privatisation when in opposition – continues to out-Tory the Tories. Chancellor Gordon Brown has just sold the government's most influential privatisation quango to the big business privatisers themselves!

Partnerships UK, known by the supposedly cool acronym of P: UK but actually pronounced "puke", plays a "pivotal role in the development of public private partnerships in the UK". This means it develops government's policy on private finance initiatives (PFIs), draws up contracts, helps evaluate projects and generally nags government departments and councils to sell off their services in PFI deals. Now the treasury has flogged 51 percent of it to some of Britain's leading privatisers.

The quango is a successor to the Treasury Taskforce, which was always accused of favouring big business in PFI sell-offs because of the huge number of businessmen seconded to its office. Now Brown has formalised that subservience to the private sector by accepting £45m in return for a majority stake.

The sale was 30 percent oversubscribed, leading treasury minister Andrew Smith to crow that "the market has given a vote of confidence in

Partnerships UK and the whole PFI industry". After all, votes of the money men are so much more valuable than those of Labour's core voters who are turned off by the sell-offs.

The treasury claimed that "the investors represent a cross section of the marketplace", but the 11 firms putting up the millions are in fact drawn mostly from those who already squeeze PFI cash out of the public sector.

Prudential subsidiary PPM Ventures tried to get into the PFI act by bidding for air traffic control. It didn't win the deal, but the fact that Prudential now partly owns P: UK should help in future. Prudential executive Derek Higgs sitting as Partnerships UK chairman can't hurt either.

Abbey National, which describes itself as "a leading provider of finance through the UK government's private finance initiative", and invests in the controversial University College London Hospital PFI has also bought into P: UK, along with Barclays. The latter has a "dedicated PFI Unit" and claims "in-depth experience of defence, education and employment, health, local authority, home office and transport PFI projects".

Barclays was involved in the NHS privatisation in

partnerships uk

The Royal Bank of Scotland

BARCLAYS

↑ ABBEY NATIONAL

Norfolk and is currently working out how to profit from an old people's day hospital and mental hospital in Redbridge. It is joined by the Bank of Scotland, which also worked on the Norfolk NHS sell-off and which, with its subsidiary, the British Linen Bank, is central to the PFI game, making money out of the Halifax General, Stonehaven Hospital and Dudley hospital schemes.

The rival Royal Bank of Scotland, which is central to the North Durham NHS PFI, has also bought shares in P: UK. But it is not just the banks who want in. Two private prison operators, Group 4 and Serco, are also new joint owners of P: UK. Both firms have tried to expand their interests with varying success into state education contracts, and they are joined at P:UK by Jarvis, which is especially keen on schools privatisation and was one of the firms involved in the Hatfield crash.

Announcing the deal, Smith said the government is committed to another £20bn worth of PFIs over the next three years, on top of the £13bn worth of deals already signed. It looks like P: UK's shareholders will have full order books for the foreseeable future.

Blood suckers

IN the last *Eye* we reported on the government's continuing shameful treatment of the country's stricken haemophiliac community. We suggested that while the health department was refusing to provide safe synthetic blood clotting agents for adults, it was at least finding the funds to make them available to children.

We would like to apologise for any misunderstanding this may have caused. We now know that because of a shortage of synthetic supplies, English children too may now end up receiving risky blood clotting agents.

Letters have gone out to the parents of haemophiliac children warning that because of problems with the major US supplier of the recombinant factor, all preventative treatment is to be stopped, only emergency bleeding episodes will be treated and hospitals may have to resort to using human blood products.

As we reported, many countries — including Scotland, Ireland and Wales — ensure that all their

haemophiliacs, young and old, receive synthetic blood products since a series of contamination disasters in the 70s and 80s left thousands infected with HIV and potentially-fatal hepatitis C. Many haemophiliacs have learnt in the last few weeks that as recently as 1998 they have also been exposed to a potential threat from new variant CJD (nvCJD).

In England, however, in order to save an estimated £40m a year, the department of health has decided that only children under 16 can have recombinant. Many adults, for whom the nvCJD exposure was the last straw, have gone on a treatment strike in protest, claiming the risk from their bleeding disorder is less than that from the diseases to which they are still being exposed.

Shortly after receiving her letter warning of a shortage of the synthetic clotting agent, Dawn Bartle's two-year-old son Jonathan started bleeding in the mouth. With some trepidation she took him to hospital — her haemophiliac uncle has been infected by hepatitis A and C thanks to contaminated blood supplies — and she did not want her young son exposed to any kind of infection risk.

In fact the hospital decided initially not to use any treatment. His mother took him back on three consecutive days before he was given a new but

slow acting medicine, which after a few more days eventually stopped the bleeding.

The health department believes supplies are likely to be restored within 90 days. "But what do you do in the meantime — play Russian roulette with your child's life?" she asked.

Last week about 200 haemophiliacs protested outside the Commons at the lack of either an inquiry into the infections or any offer of compensation. Sadly there was no sign of the many Labour MPs who in opposition signed an early-day motion calling for compensation for hepatitis C sufferers — including, er, health secretary Alan Milburn and sidekick Denham.

As hepatitis suffer David Latimer, said: "The government has paid out around £600m so far to farmers for foot and mouth disease, which is neither fatal to animals nor humans. In contrast, UK haemophiliacs have been infected with HIV, various hepatitis strains including hepatitis C and learnt recently that many have been exposed to blood from a victim of nvCJD — most are fatal infections. Can someone explain why a non-fatal animal disease is deemed more important than several viral infections that have caused the death of hundreds of humans, that continue to kill and that was avoidable?" Answers please.

PRISONS: why BoVer?

WHAT happens when a voluntary board of prison visitors (BoV) tries to do something to help inmates? Its members get the sack.

At Haslar, a holding centre for immigration detainees in Gosport, BoV members heard whispers that all was not well and decided to conduct a race survey. They had the approval of prisons minister Paul Boateng — but met deep hostility from the governor, Brian McAlley. The final trigger for the survey came when a prison officer, in reply to a question from BoV chair Kathryn Harrison about catering for two Jewish inmates, replied: "We have gas ovens. What more do they need?"

The eventual survey indeed found evidence of intimidation and bullying; and its findings were met with praise from almost everyone including Boateng and Sir David "Rambo" Ramsbotham, the chief inspector of prisons. But the report was met with outrage by McAlley, who tried to have it withdrawn and accused the authors of making some of it up.

Two board members resigned and another, Steve Grindey, filed a formal complaint against the governor claiming bullying and harassment. Curiously, when questionnaires arrived — supposedly designed to investigate the complaint — it was clear they were aimed at investigating board members instead.

A short time later the chair of the board, along with Mr Grindey and another member, Roger Price, came up for their triennial review. They were all dismissed.

THE DARLING DUDS

THE fashion for big employers to snatch surpluses from their employees' pension schemes and reduce their benefits grows apace — helped, it seems, by social security secretary Alistair Darling.

Darling is confronting the problem head on by making two bold new appointments to the occupational pension regulatory authority (OPRA). Both are representatives of, er, the big employers.

OPRA's job is to "help make sure that occupational pension schemes are safe and well run" — in short, to stop bosses "doing a Maxwell". However, as *Eye* readers well know, many IBM pensioners, for example, believe the firm is "doing a legalised Maxwell" by grabbing a huge pension surplus. So they won't be best pleased to learn that one of Darling's new appointees is Duncan Campbell, IBM's former company secretary and a man who was "closely involved in the restructuring of their pension plans".

Crucially, Campbell held the post from 1993 to 1999, the era of the "new IBM" when "old fashioned" attitudes to pensions were abandoned. Despite a 30-year association with IBM, Campbell is considered an "independent" trustee of OPRA because he has been self employed for the past two years.

The fate of pensioners of former nationalised



OPRA lover: Alistair Darling

industries is another controversial area. Only a determined campaign by Labour MPs like John Prescott and John Heppell, when in opposition, stopped the then Tory minister John MacGregor grabbing a surplus out of former British Rail pension scheme.

The episode obviously left a mark on Darling, whose second appointment on to OPRA is one David Adams... one of the architects of the privatisation of the BR pension scheme.



In the City

IMPRISONED Equitable Life policyholders should not take too seriously Easter weekend headlines suggesting that its new directors intend to pursue their predecessors and advisers into court over the society's effective insolvency.

The appointment of Herbert Smith to examine the mistakes of the old regime, together with the roles of auditors Ernst & Young and lawyers Denton Wilde Sapte, looks to be nothing more than a sop to win support for the all-important deal with the guaranteed annuity rate policyholder minority.

The new, suddenly policyholder friendly board, like Tony Blair ahead of the election, likes to be seen to be listening. Public meetings with enraged policyholders have echoed to calls for legal action against the arrogant, complacent and incompetent trio of John Sclater, Alan Nash and Chris Headdon plus their advisers who drove the Equitable ever onwards towards disaster. So new chairman Vanni Treves declares there will be an investigation. But how could Equitable sue its former president, chief executive and appointed actuary for failing to spot and avoid the £1.6bn hole into which the world's oldest mutual assurance society collapsed?

Sclater and the other non-executives will say they relied on Nash, Headdon and their predecessors who were running the business. Nash and Headdon will say they merely followed existing policy and when questions arose relied on the advice of Denton Wilde Sapte and Ernst & Young – and, anyway, the non-executives saw the figures and did nothing. More importantly neither did the Department of Timidity & Inaction, which until 1997 as the GAR time bomb ticked ever louder did nothing each year when Equitable produced its accounts for inspection.

Denton Wilde Sapte will say they took counsel's advice which said there was no need to make any provision for the GAR liability because it did not have to be met and could be reduced by cutting the GAR policyholders' bonuses, and that this opinion was initially upheld in the high court. And anyway they only advised. The directors decided.

Ernst & Young will claim – as auditors always do – that they relied on the information from the board and the lawyers about the GAR liability, the too late reinsurance policy and whether both had to be fully disclosed or not and that, anyway, the Treasury did not change the rules about disclosure until 1998 by when it was too late.

As Treves, a City lawyer, admits, there will be no legal action unless there is a good chance of success and of the reward justifying the costs. Legal action against Nash and Headdon, however satisfying to policyholders, is unlikely to recover enough to make any difference. For that Equitable would have to sue the usual deep pockets – its lawyers and auditors. But Denton Wilde Sapte are still acting, which is hardly a sign of expected conflict.

Reading between the lines Treves is already signalling the likely outcome of the Herbert Smith investigation. It is a cosmetic with little chance of becoming reality – especially given the further embarrassment Equitable would face as everyone blamed everyone else.

But such an outcome will not win the hearts and votes of policyholders who want to see Nash and Headland made to suffer, not slink away into comfortable shadows, pensions intact.

Significantly Herbert Smith is not seemingly examining the prospects for legal action against the DTI, Treasury and Financial Services Authority for negligence in failing to protect the Equitable policyholders from their directors. But then that is not an action the society itself could bring with any chance of success.

However, after the law lords' landmark ruling that the creditors of the Bank of Cocaine & Crooks International can sue the Bank of England for failing to prevent the BCCI crash, the Equitable policyholders may now be in a better position to demand compensation from the government for another set of negligent regulators as was successfully done with Barlow Clowes.

DERRICK COLLIN is the chief executive of AIM-listed Comprehensive Business Services which in 1999 acquired his Brulines business that provides electronic anti-fraud software that measures beer flow to pub chains in a deal then worth £3.3m. Placed at 65p the shares raced to 463p but are now back to 241p.

Still a big result for Collin who received £1m in cash and more than 3m shares. So it is unfortunate that he is often confused with the Derrick Collin or Derrick Collin-Stevenson who was a director of pub and club chain Thornaby Leisure which went into receivership in 1996 with debts of more than £700,000 and a deficiency for creditors of £77,000.

But he is most certainly not to be confused with a Derrick Collin who was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment (all but two months suspended) in 1986 for deception and attempted extortion in a scheme designed to obtain £150,000 from an offshore construction company.

These clearly must be different Derrick Collins and obviously no relation.

"MR Hutchings has been advised that the conclusion to be drawn from that report is that all remuneration and benefits that he received were within his contractual arrangements and entitlements and had the necessary authorisations and approvals."

That was how the lawyers for deposed Tomkins dictator Greg Hutchings interpreted last December the internal investigation into his "don't spare the shareholders" regime when claiming that he had been "exonerated" by the Ernst & Young report.

The Tomkins board, still heavily influenced by Hutchings' cronies and appointees, has so far declined to publish the accountant's report, despite having used the revelation that the former chief executive had put his wife and housekeeper plus luxury flats and executive jets on the company tab to remove him.

Now board members have reaped the inevitable reward for their lack of courage. Emboldened by this characteristic failure to stand up to him, Hutchings has begun his own promised legal counter attack by claiming 2m withheld share options while still waving the threat of a £5m claim for compensation.

Yet those with knowledge of the Ernst & Young report says it in no way exonerates Hutchings. What it does do, however, is show how he manipulated broad brush board approvals with the assistance of his

Stock Horror

Richard Branson's real lottery – his retail group Victory

Value today of £100 invested in 1996 in...

£6	£152
...Branson's Victory when it floated	...The rest of the stock market at the same time

former partner and finance director Ian Duncan and the acquiescence of the Tomkins board and auditors to get his own way without any disclosure to shareholders. No doubt one reason, despite the bluster, Hutchings has yet to sue for the £5m.

Former chairman Michael Moore is said to have been stunned to discover how Hutchings interpreted an agreement that allowed payments to his wife which mushroomed into an undisclosed £30,000 a year.

The report confirmed that everything had been agreed or approved in principle but not in the ultimate Hutchings practice. But that was down to the Tomkins non-executives on the remuneration committee. And they were the dogs that never barked. Which is one reason new chairman David Newlands, who sat silently on that committee for a year, would not have found the report comfortable reading.

Two other members – Hutchings' pals Ali Wambold and Roger Holland – who have now finally resigned would have found the report even less pleasant. Equally company secretary Richard Marchant, who is still in his well-paid place.

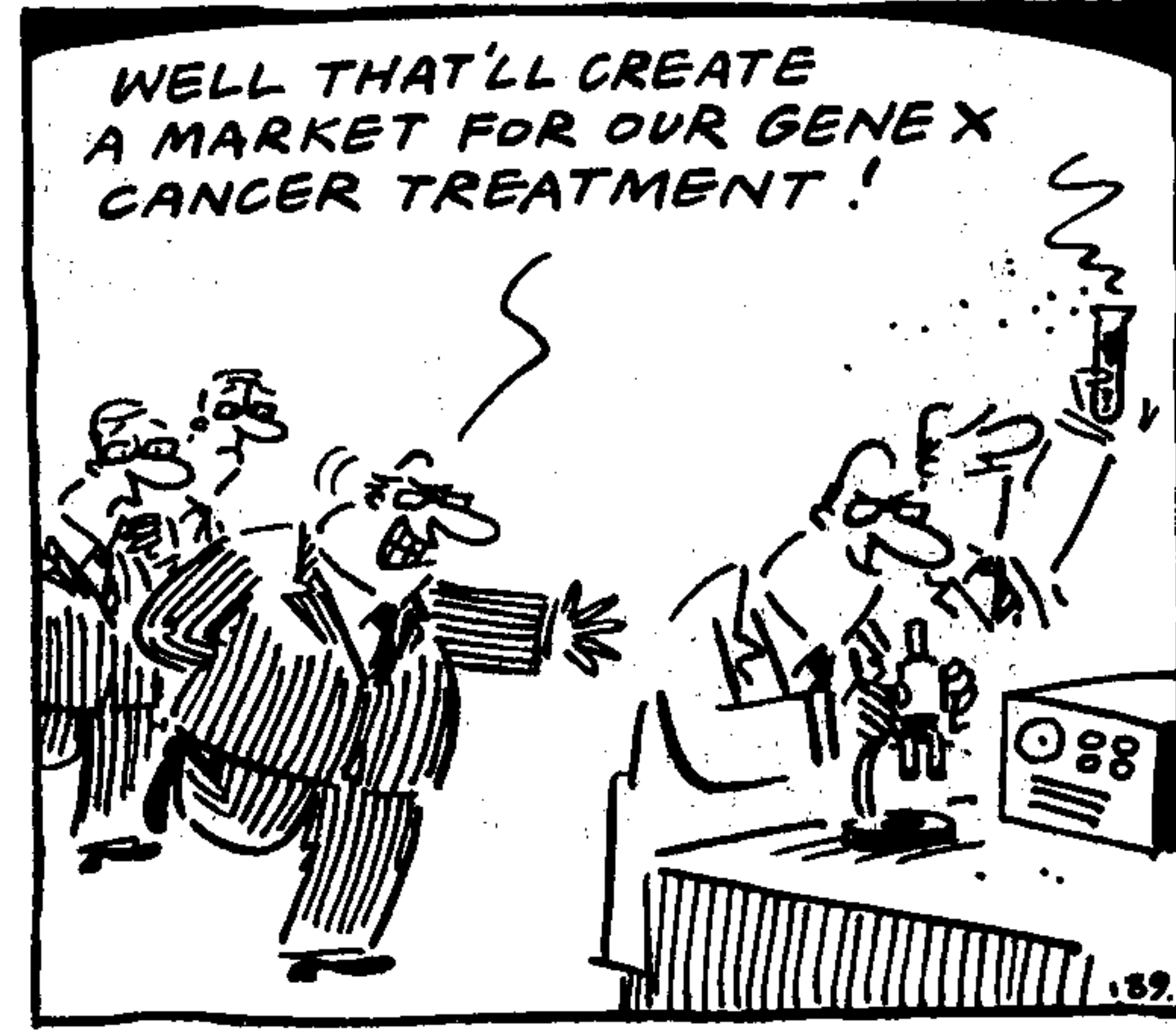
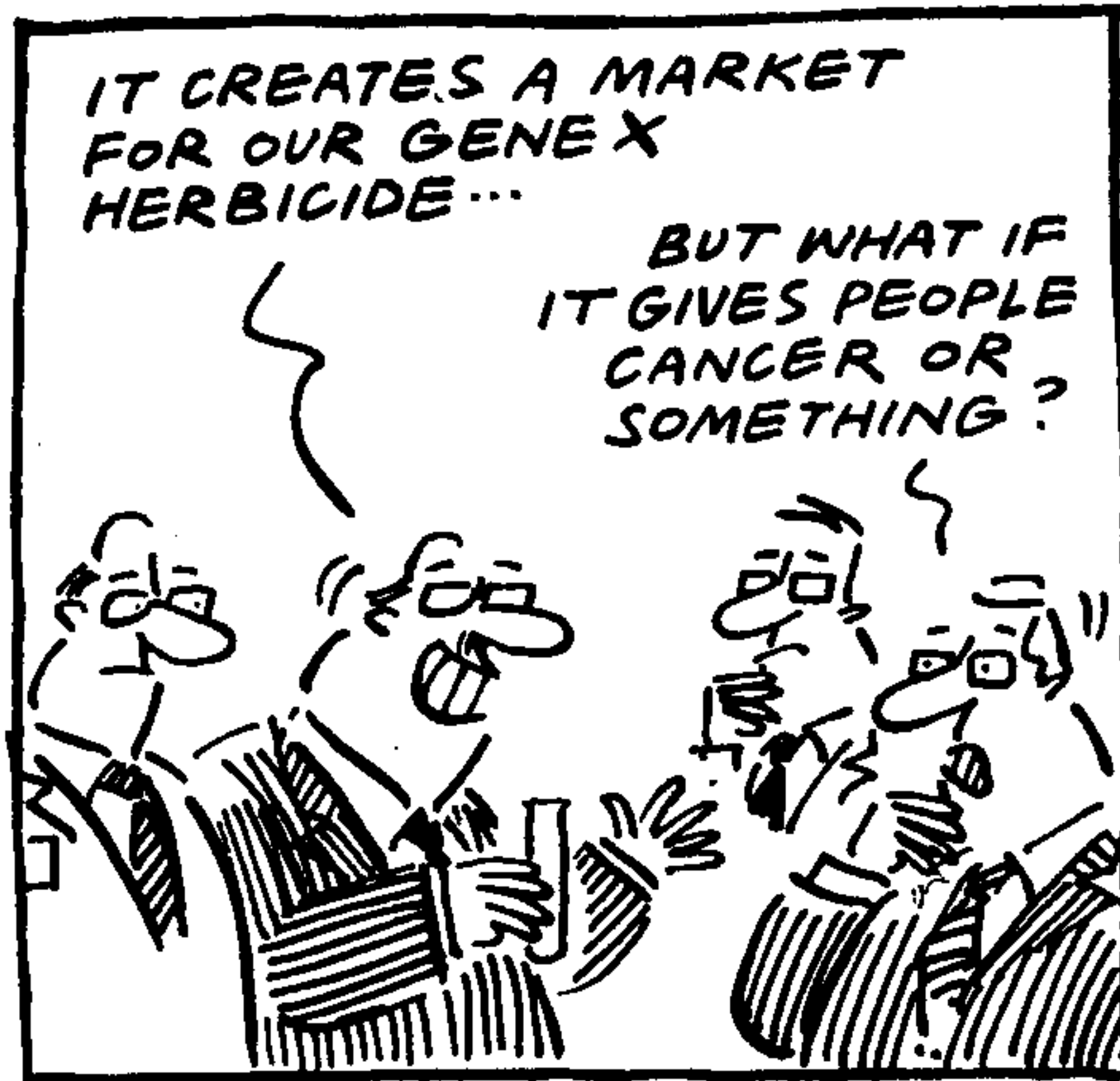
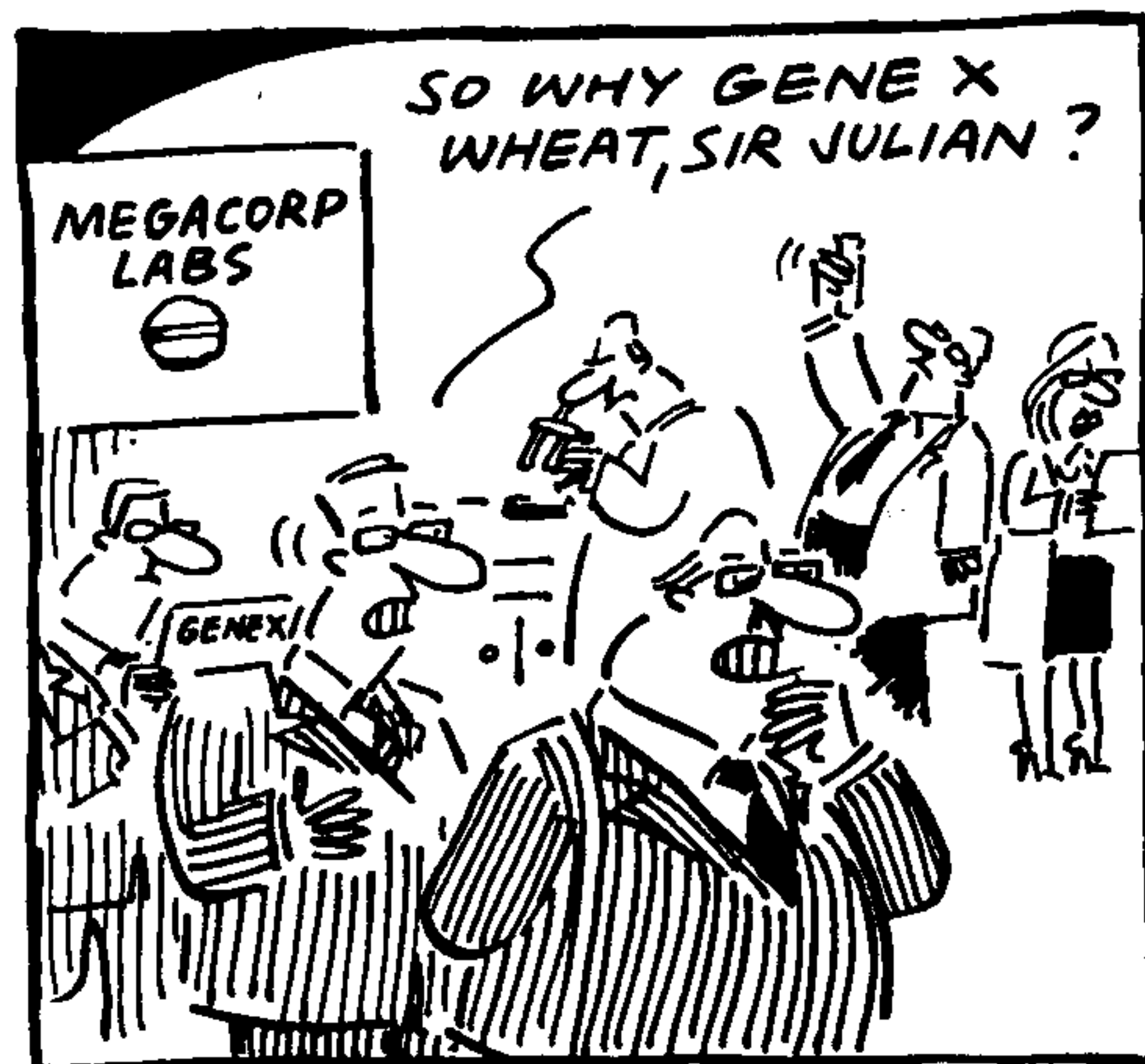
Back in December Newlands bumbled about legal advice and risk of defamation and how the report could not be published until Hutchings had been bought off.

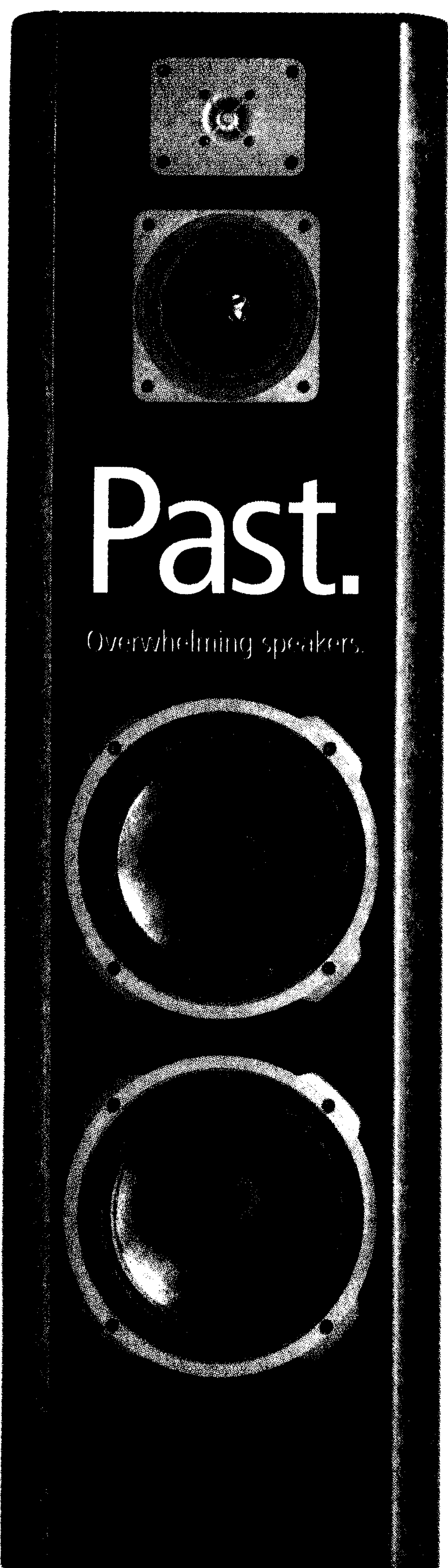
The truth would seem to be that Ernst & Young exposed not just Hutchings and Duncan for their greed but also several other past and present Tomkins directors for their failure to be diligent in the protection of shareholders' interests. Just because the abuses were approved did not stop them from being abuses. So it suited both sides for the report exposing this collapse in corporate governance not to be given to Tomkins shareholders already angered by the company's poor stock market performance. But now that Hutchings has declared war and Wambold and Holland are gone, why should shareholders be prevented from reading a report for which they have paid? What now are Newlands and the other Tomkins directors afraid of? Do they want to do a cosy deal with Hutchings without shareholders ever knowing the truth or not until it is too late? If it was all legal, why was Hutchings forced out? If it was not, why pay him anything and why not name, shame and sack those who allowed such corporate excesses? After all, though they try to forget it, Newlands and friends are managers not owners.

'Henry Slicker and Partners'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG





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Overwhelming speakers.



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Overwhelming sound.

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own home using a hide-away bass module plus cube arrays so small they're virtually invisible. In the

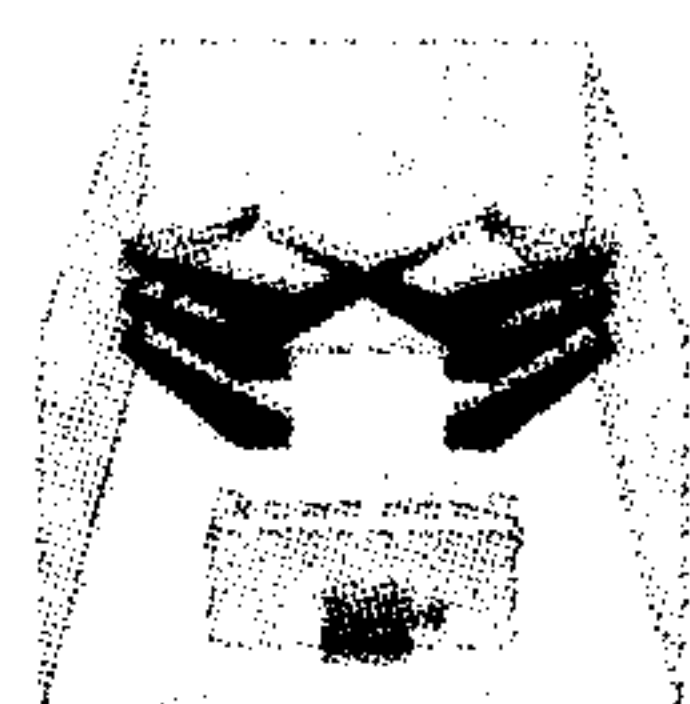
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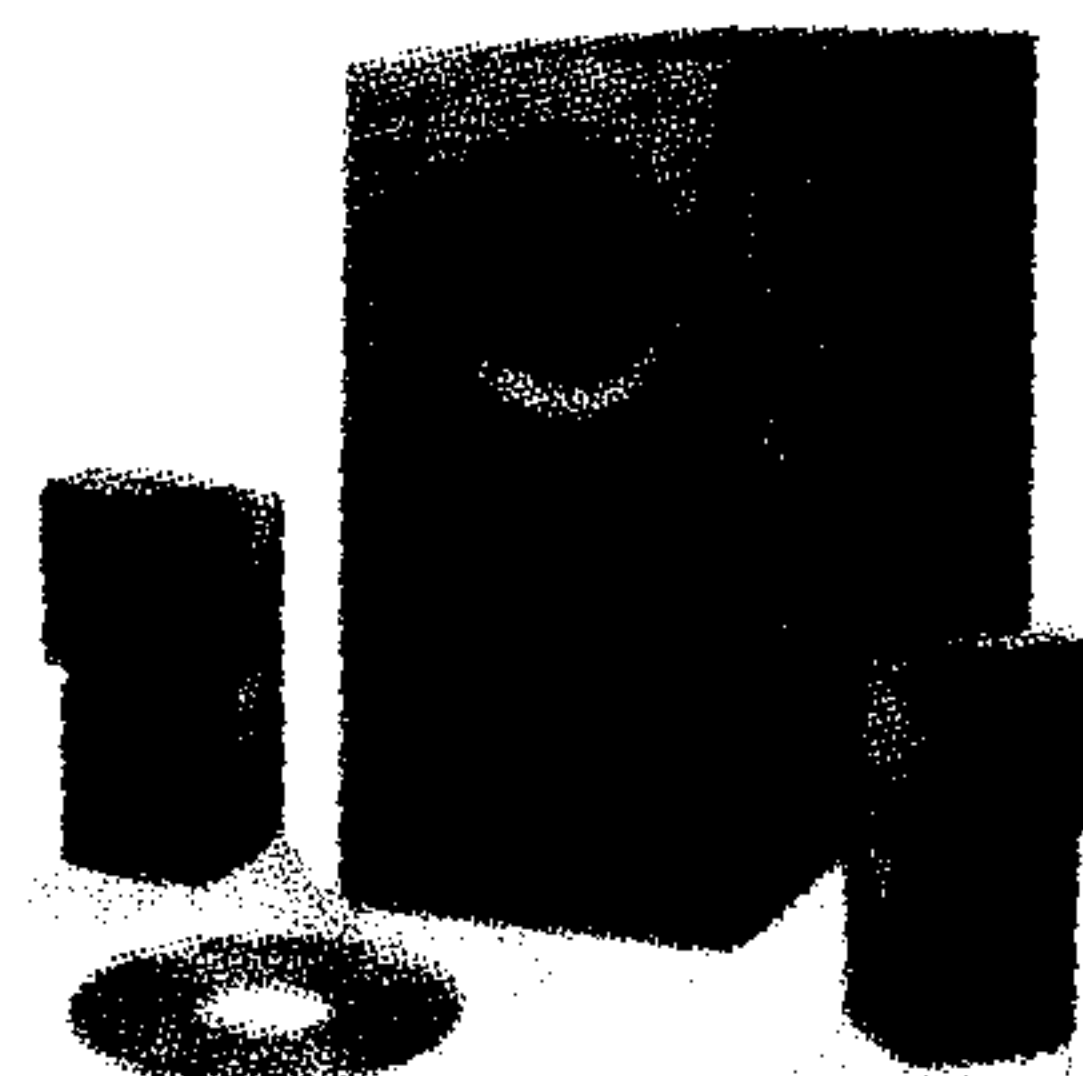
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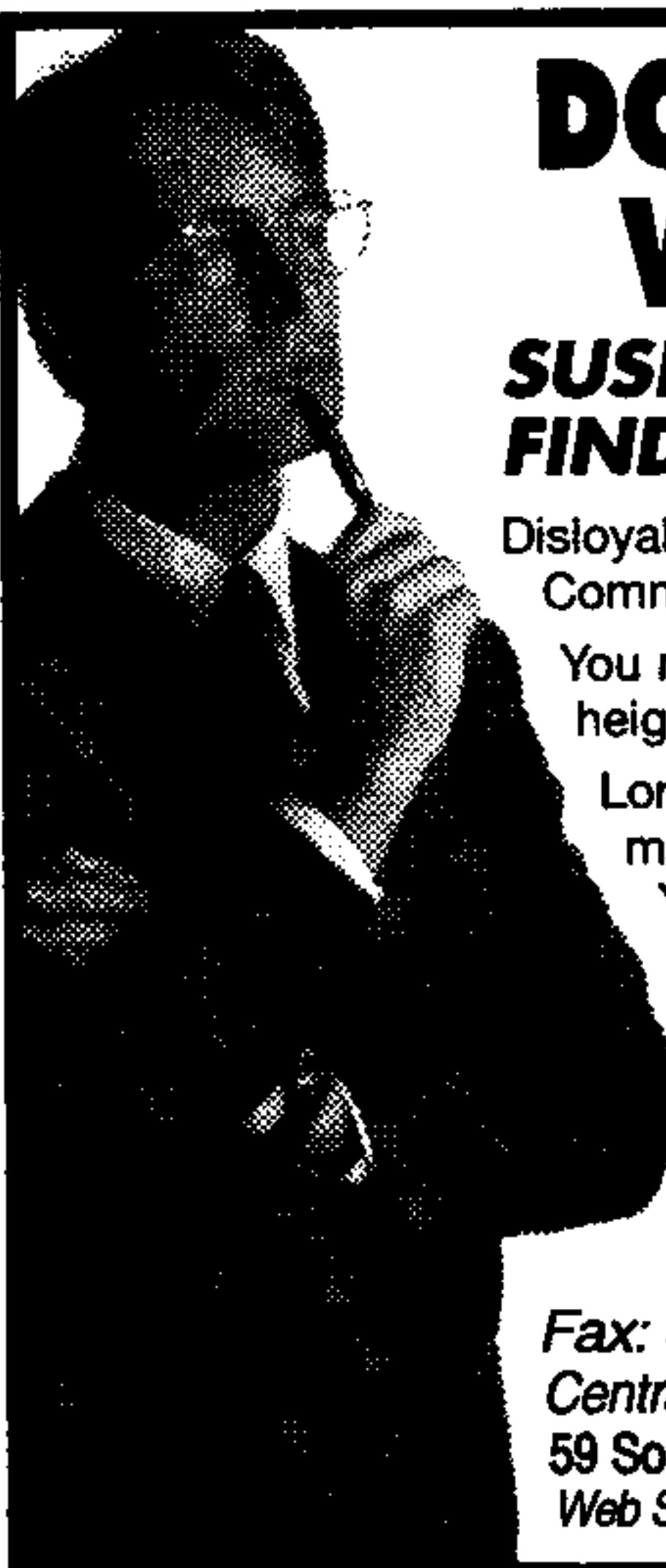


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1997 - Pinot Gris "Clos St Urbain Rangon de Thann"	£ 470
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1997 - Riesling "Clos Windsbuhl"	£ 350
Côte Rôtie - E. Guigal	
1996 - Château d'Ampuis	£ 640
Côte Rôtie - E. Guigal	
1997 - Brune et Blonde	£ 330
E. Guigal	
1995 - Châteauneuf-du-Pape	♥ £ 210
Hermitage - P. Jaboulet-Ainé	
1998 - La Chapelle	£ 710
Cornas - P. Jaboulet-Ainé	
1997 - Domaine de Saint-Pierre	£ 410
Saint-Joseph - P. Jaboulet-Ainé	
1996 - Le Grand Pompée	♥ £ 160
Coteaux du Languedoc	
1998 - Prieuré de Saint-Jean-de-Bébian	£ 210
Corbières	
1998 - Domaine des Courtilles	£ 160
Savennières - Coulée de Serrant - Nicolas Joly	
1988 - Clos de la Coulée de Serrant	£ 650
Savennières - Coulée de Serrant - Nicolas Joly	
1996 - Clos de la Coulée de Serrant	£ 450
Savennières - Coulée de Serrant - Nicolas Joly	
1997 - Clos de la Coulée de Serrant	£ 390
PORTUGAL	
1997 - Quinta das Castas (Douro)	£ 190
1995 - Quinta da Gaivosa (Douro)	£ 370
1985 - Dow's (Porto)	£ 470
1997 - Quinta do Castelinho (Porto)	£ 260

ITALY

Per 12 bottles

Barolo - Angelo Gaja	
1995 - Sperss	£ 930
Barbaresco- Angelo Gaja	
1989 - Barbaresco	£ 1 700
Barbaresco- Angelo Gaja	
1996 - Barbaresco	£ 860
Brunello di Montalcino - Pieve Santa Restituta - Angelo Gaja	
1995 - Sugarille	£ 610
Bolgheri - Tenuta San Guido	Per 6 bottles
1998 - Sassicaia	£ 610
Bolgheri - Tenuta di trinoro	Per 12 bottles
1998 - Palazzi	£ 860
Bolgheri - Tenuta di trinoro	
1999 - Le Cupole	£ 470
Colline Lucchesi rosso - Tenuta di Valgiano	
1998 - Valgiano rosso di Palistorti	♥ £ 160

NEW-ZEALAND

Marlborough - Cloudy Bay	
1998 - Cloudy Bay (Chardonnay)	£ 240
Marlborough - Cloudy Bay	
1999 - Cloudy Bay (Sauvignon blanc)	£ 210

CHILE

Rapel Valley - Colchagua - Casa Lapostolle	Per 6 bottles
1997 - Clos Apalta	£ 260
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